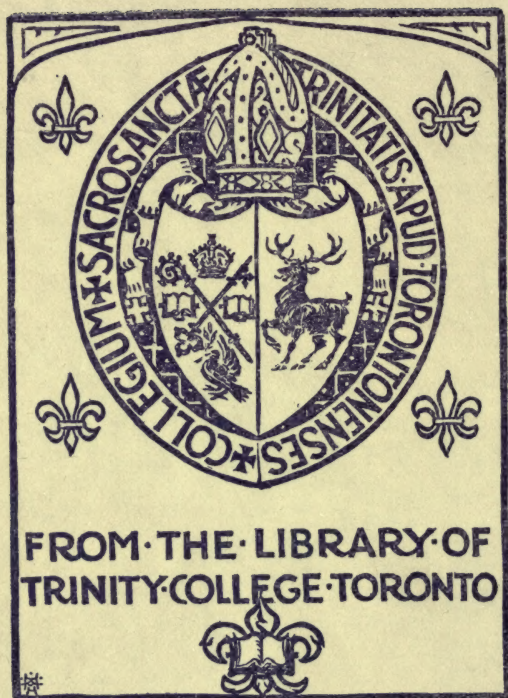


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BELIEF, FAITH, AND PROOF
AN INQUIRY INTO THE SCIENCE OF
NATURAL THEOLOGY

BELIEF, FAITH, & PROOF

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SCIENCE OF
NATURAL THEOLOGY

BY THE REV. J. H. BEIBITZ, M.A.

VICAR OF ALL SAINTS', WARWICK; EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP
OF COVENTRY; SOMETIME VICE-PRINCIPAL OF LICHFIELD
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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LONDON

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TO MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

IT so happened that the writer of this Introduction had the opportunity of introducing the author of this book to its publisher and suggesting its publication. So it was that he came to undertake, when it was accepted for publication, to make some attempt to recommend it to the public—an attempt which, now that he reads the book in print, he feels to be superfluous; for it quite sufficiently recommends itself, and the “introducer” has no reputation as a philosopher such as would enable him to add anything to its authority. Nevertheless, he must abide by his compact.

The world of men has, on the whole, shown much more confidence in believing in God than ability to convince by reasoning the minority of atheists or sceptics. Paley, in 1802, proved the existence of God from the evidence of design in Nature, but he would not have removed the doubts of Hume or of Kant. Certainly the roots of belief and unbelief appear to lie deeper than logical arguments. Nevertheless, no faith

can gain or keep the respect of mankind if it cannot vindicate and maintain itself in the field of free discussion. If it cannot convince its determined adversaries, it must at least be able to satisfy the mass of reasoning mankind that it has the best of the argument—that there is more intellectual difficulty in resisting belief than in accepting it. Since the days of the Greek philosophers theism has, on the whole, been able to do this. It has left the dissidents in the position of eccentrics. Accordingly, it is useful to review the arguments by which theism has, throughout a long period of history, passing through very different stages of civilisation and phases of culture, vindicated its faith and its claim on the reason of man. Mr. Beibitz begins his book, without any preface, by an enumeration of the arguments for the existence of God which have maintained themselves over a very long period. Some of them have been apparently overthrown, as Anselm's ontological proof by many opponents, or the argument from design in Paley's form by the rise of the Darwinian doctrine of evolution. But they have had a tendency to revive. After all, it has been felt, there is "something in them." More strength remains on their side than appeared probable at the first onslaught. So Mr. Clement Webb has taught us to feel about Anselm's argument,

and multitudes of modern thinkers about the argument from design. In fact it was the first great critic of this latter argument, Immanuel Kant, who himself revived it on what is, I suppose, its strongest ground by insisting on the existence in the moral field of absolute values, and beings who must be regarded as "ends in themselves." Others of these arguments have been quite antiquated, in the form in which they used to be urged, by changes in our conception both of the world, as physical science has taught us to view it, or of the religions of mankind, as their wide comparative study has tended to represent them. Thus the cosmological argument and the argument from the consent of mankind at least need complete restatement. But it does not follow that they are dead.

Mr. Beibitz therefore takes the old arguments, re-examines them in the light of our present-day knowledge, and, restating them, still claims for each a permanent impressiveness, and taking them together, an impressiveness which is overwhelming in force.

As I say, I think the book needs no recommendation. I feel as I read it but one regret: I cannot but wish it had been longer. At times the argument is very closely compressed. And in the latter part of the book, where the posi-

tively Christian beliefs in the Triune Being of God and in the Incarnation and the Cross are, not indeed assumed or urged as evidence, but introduced as claiming consideration, I feel to desire some statement of the Christian idea of Revelation and its relation to Reason, fuller than is given at the beginning of the essay. But, as I say, these positively Christian considerations are not urged as evidence or taken for granted; and nowhere, as far as I can discern, can the author be accused of ignoring a serious argument against him. His course of reasoning strikes me as compressed indeed, but never as hurried, or as leaving any serious objection unexamined. And he is always candid and fair. Thus, in the present "strife of tongues," I think this short work on a vast subject should make any reader who desires to believe in God feel a profound reassurance—a sense that the wisdom of the ages has not after all been antiquated by the newer lights.

CHARLES GORE.

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BELIEF, FAITH, AND PROOF

CHAPTER I

AIM AND METHOD

NATURAL THEOLOGY is the name given to that branch of theology which seeks to discover what evidence concerning the being and character of God is to be found in nature, using that word in its widest and most inclusive sense, as embracing not only the whole realm of natural objects, but also the ideas, aims, and aspirations of the mind of man. Its method has become more or less stereotyped. Writers on the subject have long ago formulated the famous five arguments which are said to prove the existence of God. These are:

I. The argument from the general consent of mankind to the existence of God, or gods: the proof *e consensu gentium*.

II. The argument from our conception of cause to the existence of a First Cause: the cosmological proof.

III. The argument from the evidences of design in nature to the existence of a Designer: the teleological proof.

IV. The argument from conscience to a Moral Lawgiver: the moral proof.

V. The argument from the idea we can form of a perfect Being as necessarily involving the real existence of such a Being: the ontological proof.

The present work has for its object to show:

I. That Natural Theology is a real science, reaching its conclusion by the same method as has proved so successful in the case of the natural sciences. This forms the subject of the present chapter.

II. That the five arguments enumerated above do not constitute a demonstrative proof of the existence of God, such proof being from the nature of the case impossible, but may nevertheless constitute the foundation of a reasonable belief. This we seek to show in Chapter II.

III. That modern science and philosophy make necessary a restatement of the forms in which those arguments have been put forward, but that, so restated, they are valid within the limitation laid down above. This discussion occupies Chapters III. to VII.

IV. That the evidence tends to establish the existence not simply of a spiritual background

of nature, or of the spiritual character of the universe as a whole, but of the Personal God which religion demands. This we consider in Chapter VIII.

V. That the difficulties which attach to theistic beliefs are not insuperable obstacles to a reasonable faith. This position we try to justify in Chapter IX.

What, then, should be the method of Natural Theology? How, in other words, are we to set about answering the momentous question, whether nature does or does not bear witness to God? "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by those things which are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." How are we to bring to the test of our reason, and thus investigate, the truth of this sublime belief?

A tremendous difficulty here confronts us, in the vastness of that field of nature which the advance of the natural sciences has disclosed to us? The day has long since passed, when an individual thinker could lay claim to the title of a "natural philosopher."

So far from any single mind being able to include in its grasp the whole field of natural phenomena, there is no living man who is master of all the details of one science. Perforce we

live in an age in which specialisation has been carried to its extremest limits.

And the complexity of our subject-matter is enormously increased when we include, as we must, not only nature as external to us, but the human mind in which it is mirrored. Our first business, then, is to try to discover some clue, if possible, which may serve as a guide through such a bewildering and intricate maze as the entire field presented by the natural sciences, as well as by psychology and the history of human beliefs.

Such a clue is provided by a method which has been used with striking success in natural science, the method of hypothesis. In order to make perfectly clear to our minds the nature and employment of this method, we must first recall what in fact is the aim which science proposes to itself. All science must begin with the careful and laborious collection of facts, but this does not itself constitute a science. The most complete enumeration of all the species of living plants or animals is not botany or zoology. The object of the scientific inquirer is not to ascertain as many facts as possible, although this is the necessary foundation of his work, but to find out the relations of the facts to each other, and then to express these relations in as few and simple formulæ as possible.

Two accounts of the aim of science have been given which are apparently, but only apparently, inconsistent: (1) That science is descriptive, not explanatory; (2) that science is essentially the search for the causes of things. The first is true, inasmuch as science does not propose to give an ultimate explanation of anything. Its sole business is to give a simple and accurate description of what actually happens, to exhibit as far as it can the true order or sequence of natural phenomena. And this is precisely the same thing as the discovery of their causes, in the scientific sense of the word "cause," which has been defined as "the totality of the conditions in the presence of which an event occurs, and in the absence of any member of which it does not occur. More briefly, causation in the current scientific sense means sequence under definitely known conditions." In other words, not facts, but the connection between facts, is the proper subject-matter of science.

What is the nature of the ultimate reality of the universe? What makes things happen in such and such a way and not otherwise? are questions which science relegates to metaphysics.

Now, how does science set out to discover the connections which exist between natural phenomena? For clearly such connections are not given simply, as the facts themselves are. They

can only be ascertained by the application of methods which have been elaborated by minds trained in and devoted to the pursuit of science. Among such methods is one which demands the exercise not of the intellect alone, but of the imagination. A theory, a guess, occurs to the scientific inquirer. He proceeds to put it to the test, by observation or experiment. Will this formula hold good? Will it explain the facts at present known? If it is so far successful, it is adopted as a working hypothesis. The next step is the collection of yet more facts, and the result may be that the hypothesis has to be modified or abandoned. But, on the other hand, if a given hypothesis does explain all the facts to which it can be applied, it is on its way to be accepted as a scientific truth. The test of an hypothesis is whether it is capable of giving a coherent and rational explanation of observed facts. In this manner, most of the greatest scientific discoveries have been made. No more brilliant example of this method has perhaps ever been exhibited than the discovery, made simultaneously by Darwin and Wallace, of the principle of "natural selection." That principle was suggested to the minds of its discoverers as the result of relatively few observations. Once made, this hypothesis became the stimulus to an enormously extended field of

research. And while to-day many biologists question the exact extent of its applicability, it is acknowledged to have been a potent factor in organic evolution. The hypothesis is accepted, not as a verified fact given in experience, but as a theory which is held to be true, because it explains, or holds together, a vast series of facts in the world of living forms. And, again, to take a still more far-reaching example, the uniformity of nature, the very foundation-stone of all science, is itself the grandest hypothesis of all—one which can never be absolutely and completely verified, but which is yet in course of continuous verification, as science is ever extending its researches into new territory.

Scientific hypotheses may be divided into two classes: (1) Those which have suddenly flashed into the mind of an investigator as brilliant guesses, the intuitions of genius; (2) those which have been suggested as the result of patient and laborious research. In either case, the only test of their truth is, that they should supply a rational and coherent explanation of the facts.

Here, it seems to the present writer, we have the most appropriate method for our own inquiry, and the only one which can safely guide us through the immense multiplicity of facts which nature presents. The Being of God will

be our hypothesis, and we can test it by applying it to the various classes of facts which are included under the five arguments which have been enumerated above. The facts will be seen to be of two kinds: (1) Ordinary phenomena of nature, which are the proper object of the natural sciences, and (2) processes which take place in human minds, and which are dealt with by the studies of comparative religions, psychology, ethics, and in part by metaphysics. The first class includes the cosmological and teleological arguments, the second the argument *e consensu gentium*, and the moral and ontological arguments. The cosmological argument also, in part, falls under the second head, as it will involve a discussion of the meaning of "cause," which belongs to the province of metaphysics. The same is true, to some extent, of the argument from design, for the question whether a real teleology, or purposive striving for an end, is to be found in nature, must include an examination into the meaning of "process." But, all through, our aim will be a simple one—namely, to discover whether our hypothesis of the Being of God, as compared with other rival hypotheses, supplies the most rational and coherent interpretation of the facts. If we find that it does this, we shall be justified, according to the canons of scientific method, in regarding it as true.

Before we enter upon this inquiry, there are three preliminary points which call for attention, the first two of which can be dismissed with a brief notice, while the third will demand treatment at greater length.

I. To some, and especially to those who have never been troubled with religious doubts, it may appear that this whole investigation is futile, inasmuch as God has revealed Himself to man, and therefore it is unnecessary, if not impious, to discuss the grounds on which belief in His existence is founded. Such a position, however, involves a misconception of the nature and purport of revelation. No knowledge of God is possible, except by way of revelation. But it is obvious that He may, and probably will, reveal Himself in a variety of ways. And we are safe in assuming that in no case shall we be excused from vigorous mental effort to discover the fact and to master the contents of that revelation. All knowledge implies an element which is outside us, which is simply "given," as well as the mental process whereby we assimilate it, and make it part of ourselves. Even to understand the structure of our own minds we must, as it were, place ourselves outside them. Still more obviously is this the case with the knowledge we may seek to gain of another person. All such knowledge must start with his

self-communication, or revelation, to us. And it is not otherwise with our knowledge of God, whether through nature or some other medium. There is, therefore, no such antithesis as has been commonly held to exist between "natural" and "revealed" theology.

II. A certain misapprehension may arise from our use of the word "hypothesis." This is largely due to the ordinary non-scientific use of the term as connoting something which is in its very nature uncertain. We use it, as stated, in the sense of the scientific method of the "working hypothesis," which again and again has proved its value as a means whereby some of the widest and most secure generalisations in the sphere of natural law have been attained. Such discoveries as gravitation and biological evolution may serve as illustrations.

III. Two very important preliminary questions remain. Can we hope to reach a certain proof of the existence of God? And, what is the relation between a belief in God which rests on arguments, and religious faith? But to these a whole chapter must be devoted.

CHAPTER II

PROOF, BELIEF, FAITH

THE five arguments enumerated at the beginning of the preceding chapter are sometimes termed by natural theologians "proofs of the existence of God." The first question which we have in this chapter is, whether this title is justified? Is the existence of God capable of proof? A proof is that which compels the assent of every normal mind. A proof, therefore, of God's existence must be an argument of such a nature that no rational being can withhold assent from it. Hence, the mere fact that there are atheists and agnostics who are capable of thinking rationally, and whose sincerity we cannot doubt, seems *prima facie* evidence that no such argument has yet been formulated. But, further, there are two weighty reasons for holding that no proof of the kind can ever be forthcoming, that the existence of God is of necessity incapable of proof. The first is based on the constitution of the human mind, on the kinds of propositions which alone can compel assent; the second on the nature of God Himself.

I. That the existence of God is incapable of proof follows from the constitution of the human mind.

Our minds are so constituted that there are two, and only two, classes of propositions that can compel assent:

1. Those which rest upon the evidences of the senses, or can be directly deduced from such evidence. It is true that I can doubt, and under exceptional circumstances am right in doubting, the evidence of my own senses. But the test is ready at hand, and can in most cases be easily applied. It is whether other normally constituted persons corroborate my own impression. If I see a colour as blue, which to others appears as red, I come to the conclusion that I am colour-blind. It is the common testimony of normal individuals which serves as the distinguishing test between reality and hallucination. Further, I am compelled to assent to the evidence of other men's senses, if I judge their report to be absolutely trustworthy. We should consider a man insane who questioned the existence of pyramids in Egypt, on the ground that he had never seen them with his own eyes. We are not, of course, concerned here at all with the question as to what does constitute sufficient testimony, but only with the fact that I am prepared, under certain conditions, to credit the evidence of

other men's senses equally with that of my own.

2. Those propositions which can be deduced from truths already accepted as axiomatic. Again, we do not deal with the rules which control such deductions, or with the nature of axioms, or how they have been reached, but with the fact that no sane person can doubt the truths of mathematics, so far as he is capable of understanding them, and the processes whereby they have been arrived at. Mathematics is the science which, above all others, claims to demonstrate or prove its conclusions, for they rest ultimately on a few axioms, which appear to the mind as self-evident truths.

As, therefore, the existence of God does not rest on the testimony of our senses, nor can be deduced from any of our axioms, it cannot be presented in such a form as to compel assent. It cannot be proved or demonstrated.

II. That the existence of God is incapable of proof follows, further, from the nature of God Himself.

It is a profound mistake to regard His existence as one fact among the infinite number of facts in the universe. "God, if He exists, is not merely one of the elements in the universe which we may or may not take into account in our view of it. He is either the permanent

condition of all that is and happens, or He is nothing at all." In more familiar words, "in Him we live and move and have our being." Hence the attempt, first, to consider the world apart from God, and then, from such a survey, to prove His existence, is foredoomed to failure. For the theistic creed rightly understood insists that our premiss is not defective, but radically false.

There is no such thing as a world apart from God, and from that which is non-existent no conclusion as to existence can be arrived at. A somewhat analogous instance is the barren attempt to prove our own existence. For every part of our experience from which we might seek to draw such a conclusion already involves the existence of the self which we seek to prove, or else is an experience without a self, which can easily be shown to be no experience at all—that is, an unreality. Equally unreal is a world considered an isolation from God, if He be—as, according to theism, He is—the ground of all existence and the condition of all our thinking about existence. Hence a true theology teaches that we cannot prove that God exists, and that this incapacity follows from the right idea of God as the one and sole Reality, the ground of all being and all thought.

A REASONABLE BELIEF.

It does not, however, follow from the fact that we cannot prove the existence of God, that we must regard theistic belief as necessarily insecure and uncertain, as hypothetical in the popular sense of the word. The vast majority of the facts which we all believe are equally incapable of proof. And this is true of them, in proportion to their living human interest—in other words, to the complexity of the interests which they involve. While mathematical truths are susceptible of rigid proof, the other sciences fall more and more away from this standard in the exact measure in which they deal with ascending forms of life. Rigid demonstration becomes increasingly less possible as we pass from the sciences of inorganic nature, where mathematical methods hold sway, to those which deal with the varied manifestations of life, as we turn from chemistry and physics to biology, from biology to psychology, from psychology to sociology. We are almost tempted to say that it is only the things which do not matter, which, at any rate, do not vitally affect us, which can be proved. With regard to all the rest, alike in science and in practical life, we have to be content with an attitude of reasonable belief.

Therefore it ought not to be a cause of disquiet to us that we seem to take up the same attitude in regard to the answer to the supreme question we put to the universe, Does God exist ?

From this it follows that the five arguments for the Divine existence, even if we deny to them the title of proofs, are not on that account deprived of value. We shall see, indeed, that they are in need of criticism and restatement. But they afford us the means of applying theism as a working hypothesis to large classes of facts, and if this furnishes a better explanation of them than any other hypothesis we have every right to assert its truth.

In this connection we do well to remember that all science starts from a belief in the uniformity of nature. Apart from this belief no science could take a single step forward. Yet uniformity is assumed, and can never be demonstrated, for it must rest to the end on an insufficient induction. The proof of it would necessitate that which must be for ever impossible—a complete knowledge of all the facts of nature. Thus, in regard to this first article of the scientific creed, as in regard to the existence of God, a reasonable belief is the utmost we can reach. Uniformity, indeed, is being constantly verified in experience, but this is the test of every good working hypothesis.

But in regard to the theistic creed, we may inquire whether there are not other factors of our nature beside the intellect which can come into play and produce an inner feeling of certitude which reasoning is powerless to create. "Faith," said Lotze, "supplies the satisfying and convincing conclusion of those upward soaring trains of thought which reason itself began, led by its own needs, but was not able to bring to a conclusion."

FAITH.

We therefore conclude this chapter by a brief inquiry into the nature of faith, in order to discover, first, its relation to the two attitudes of mind we have been hitherto considering, a compelled assent, and a reasonable belief, and secondly, whether those are right who claim for faith a certain moral quality or worth. For if God is, and if faith does possess this moral value, we can readily understand that He might so order the constitution of the world and of our minds as to leave room for, or to call into existence, its activity.

The following points seem to be clear:

I. The object of faith is from the nature of the case an object which does not admit of demonstration—that is to say, it does not rest on the evidence of sense, nor can it be deduced

from any of our axioms. The nearest approach to a definition is the well-known sentence in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It has to do with a world inaccessible to our senses, and makes that world a present reality. It is a power of vision, which transcends the reach of our physical organs.

II. The contrast is complete between the assent yielded by faith and that which is compelled by demonstration—in other words, one of the chief characteristics of faith is its freedom. It is not forced by the logical constraint of proof, nor, like belief, is it inclined this way or that by a balancing of arguments. Certainly, so long as it is a rational faith, it includes the exercise of our reasoning faculty, but it includes also the exercise of our will and our affections. It represents a spontaneous action of the whole personality. This does not of itself give a moral worth to faith, but it does indicate the possibility of it. Room is made for moral values to enter in, wherever the element of freedom makes its appearance, for it affords scope to the action of the will. But whether they do enter, in this particular case, must depend, as in all cases, on the nature of the thing chosen, or the use made of freedom. There can be no exercise of will, therefore no moral value, in the assent which

is compelled by proof. No man is made the better by his assent to the demonstration that two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third. In this respect the attitude of reasonable belief is more nearly allied to faith, in fact does partake of the nature of faith, in so far as, for example, the balancing judgment may be swayed by the will to believe, for example, in the supremacy of goodness or truth. In the unwearied investigations of the man of science, in the will to overcome obstacles or to face unpopularity, there is of course present a strong element of moral value. But we are here contrasting compelled assent, or even balancing belief, as purely intellectual attitudes, with faith as being, by its very nature, an act of the entire personality.

III. A very distinctive feature of faith is its adventurous character. The man who has faith in God does not merely adopt a certain theory of the universe, but makes the great surrender, setting his own choices and preferences aside, and choosing that which he conceives to be the Will of God. A faith which falls short of this is a defective faith. A state of mind which does not at all tend towards this self-surrender, which has in it no spark of adventure, cannot be properly described as faith. We cannot apply the name to a belief which produces no kind of

action as its natural result. The faith known to St. Paul was "faith energising through love." At this stage we can have no hesitation in assigning to faith a moral value, not simply because it involves freedom, but because of the use which it makes of freedom.

IV. In its true and proper sense, above all in its Christian sense, faith has for its object not a statement of things to be believed, but a Person. Time after time when St. Paul speaks of the faith in Christ which justifies, it would be possible, without altering the meaning, to substitute for the word "faith" the word "loyalty." In this connection, there is a close parallel between the Christian faith in Christ and the faith which we have in the goodness and trustworthiness of a friend, especially in one whose friendship is the inspiration of our whole life. It is claimed by Christians that the friendship of Jesus Christ does in fact transform the character into His likeness. The keynote of the whole religious movement described in the New Testament is "faith into Christ," and we may perhaps lay stress on the preposition, as implying that the disciple throws himself on Christ, surrenders heart and mind and will to Him, does in fact so lose himself in Him that he can say, "I live, yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me." This faith quite certainly has a moral quality,

is indeed far more a moral than an intellectual attitude.

But, once more, faith has, and must have, a rational element, seeing that it is the attitude of the whole man, including every element of his being. So our faith in a friend rests on a rational basis, while it is far other than a cold intellectual judgment. And it is with this rational basis of religious faith that our entire investigation is concerned. No arguments can produce a living faith, but only, at best, a reasonable belief. But while such a belief is not faith, it is, at all events, faith's necessary foundation. And it is well, even in the interests of faith, that the foundation should be tested, and, if it may be, secured and strengthened.

CHAPTER III

THE ARGUMENT FROM GENERAL CONSENT (" E CONSENSU GENTIUM ")

THIS argument, as its name implies, is based upon the universality of religion among mankind, and concludes therefrom that such a universal belief must be true. This is, of course, to put the argument in its crudest form. "What all men believe to be true must of necessity be true" is not a proposition likely, at the present time at all events, to be accepted. It is very hard to see why the conclusion follows from the premiss. And if it be meant that all men, everywhere, entertain definite theological beliefs, then the premiss can, with a fair amount of certainty, be shown to be false.

On the other hand, we believe that the argument can be so restated as to form the basis of a reasonable belief in the truth of theism, and that, too, on the lines of a strictly scientific method. We must turn to the young science of comparative religion to furnish us with our facts, and then inquire what is the most reasonable hypothesis which these facts suggest.

Here we are at once confronted with difficulties of various kinds.

I. The field covered is so vast, the collection of facts relating to early religion, and to the practices and beliefs of savage races at the present day, is so unmanageably huge that it is extraordinarily difficult to find a path through the labyrinth.

II. The hypotheses put forward by the experts—as, for example, concerning the origin of religion—are so contradictory that it is hard, if not impossible, to feel sure when we have touched solid ground. In part this is, no doubt, owing to the newness of the science, but also, in great measure, to the nature of the subject-matter.

Here we are not dealing with physical facts, which can be tested and verified, but with the complex and intricate workings of the human mind, and with races whose mental processes are very different from our own.

III. Yet a third difficulty is the doubt as to the validity of the argument from the customs and beliefs of present-day savages to those of primitive man. From the latter have sprung the progressive nations of our own time, while the former represent the backward, non-progressive elements of mankind. We have to take into account the possibility of degeneration, a fact not unfamiliar in biological evolution.

It would seem, then, that our best way of proceeding will be to select those results of comparative religion in regard to which there is, if not unanimity, at least a large measure of agreement; then to try to discover, by means of them, some satisfactory definition of religion; finally, to review the whole position, and inquire for the most tenable hypothesis, which is to say, the one which gives the most rational and coherent account of the facts.

But meanwhile we shall be compelled to use such words as magic at first without any attempt at definition, to avoid the use of cumbersome paraphrases.

I. The first and most assured result of modern investigation is the universality of cult. Cult (Lat. *cultus*, worship) is a most useful technical term, employed in the science of comparative religion to denote all acts (and words) of a magical or religious nature, or of a mixed or doubtful character, so that it is impossible to say definitely whether they belong to the province of magic or to that of religion. The word is admirably chosen, because its meaning is absolutely neutral, and therefore all-inclusive.

It embraces all the means by which man has ever sought to get into touch with the unseen world, from the rain-making ritual of the Australian aborigines to the highest expressions

of spiritual devotion of which the human soul is capable. And it enables us to state the premiss of the argument *e consensu gentium* with scientific accuracy, and in a form capable of proof. It has been stated on high authority that "no tribe or nation has yet been met with, destitute of belief in any higher beginnings . . . religion is a universal phenomenon of humanity." So Professor Jevons ("Introduction to Study of Religion," p. 7) thus sums up the verdict of a number of experts of various views: "There are no races, however rude, which are destitute of all idea of religion." But if our aim is to express the unanimous opinion of all the students of this subject, and that in a way in which we cannot be accused of begging the question, we should preferably state the matter thus: Cult is a universal feature of all human societies. There are no races, even in the lowest stages of savagery, in whose life cult is not a familiar and dominant element. But not only is cult universal in its extension in space. It can be traced back to the remotest ages of which we have any knowledge. The drawings traced by palæolithic man on the walls of the caves of Southern France were in all probability no simple exercises of his artistic faculty, but connected with magical observances with a view to success in the chase. In the still more distant ages of

the Mousterian and Chellian cultures rude flint implements were laid in the graves, in order that the ghosts of the dead might use their ghostly counterparts in the underworld.

Here we may feel some little doubt as to whether a real worship of the dead is indicated, or only a desire for the greater comfort of the departed. In either case, the practice comes under the head of cult, as it represents a dealing of man with the unseen world.

Cult may be regarded as predominantly consisting in ritual acts, for words, whether consisting in prayers or incantations, are chiefly used, at any rate in the earliest period, to point the significance of actions. But what kinds of actions are included under the general description of cult? A twofold division is clearest and most comprehensive:

I. Such as relate to the great crises in the life of the individual—birth, initiation, marriage, and death.

II. Such as relate to the life of the community, which may in turn be subdivided into (a) those which aim at securing the regular supply of food; (b) those which are intended to avert some present or threatening evil; and (c) partly overlapping (a) and (b), the immensely important class of rites connected with sacrifice, which will demand separate treatment.

One or two examples, chosen out of many thousands, may serve to make clear what is meant by cult. Under (I.) we may select the solemn lustration of new-born infants, sometimes also of the mother, found in the most widely separated regions, as America, South Africa, Malaya, Egypt, as well as in the Mediterranean lands. The formula used among the Aztecs was: "May this water purify and whiten thy heart; may it wash away all that is evil."

Under (II.) we may mention the solemn processions, with sacrifice of oxen, sheep, and pigs (the *suove-aurilia*), and prayers to Mars pater, and libations to Janus and Jupiter, by which the ancient Roman agricultural community sought to secure the fertility of their crops, and to ward off from them all noxious influences during the coming year.

1. A most interesting point is the great similarity which obtains among the forms of cult all over the world. This is a fascinating subject, but we can only now allude to the extraordinary anticipations of Christian baptism, as in the instance quoted above, and of the Eucharist, with which we shall have occasion to deal later. From the distribution of these similarities, it is certain that the idea of borrowing must be excluded. We can only explain them by saying that they must represent impulses very deeply rooted in our

common human nature. It will be seen later how important a part will be played in our final statement of the argument by this undoubted and most significant fact that man has tried to approach the powers of the unseen world in ways which are so largely identical, in the most widely separated regions of the earth, and during all periods of his history. But at present, we must be content with recalling and re-emphasising the admitted fact of the absolute universality of cult.

2. The second result of researches into comparative religion for which unanimity among the experts can be claimed, is the very subordinate place occupied by mythology, as compared with cult. We have perhaps been in the habit of imagining that the heathen religions chiefly consisted in stories about gods and goddesses. No opinion could be farther removed from the truth. Early religion consisted in the exact and punctilious performance of the sacred rites, of which oftentimes the significance had been lost, or perverted from the original. The beliefs, if any, that a worshipper entertained regarding the nature or history of the being towards whom the rite was directed, or of the precise way in which it acted, were matters of absolute insignificance. The one supremely important thing was, that the rite should be

performed in the ancient, traditional way, and that he should take his assigned part in it.

Here is, of course, a very marked difference between ancient and modern ideas of religion. No Christian, for example, would hold that a man's creed mattered not a jot, that the one essential thing was the correct performance of the service, yet this is precisely the case with regard to antique ritual and the religious observances of savages. Further, the myth can in very many cases be proved to be later in date than the rite, and to have originated as an attempt to explain certain features of it, whose original meaning had been forgotten. There is no doubt, for example, that the many beautiful legends connecting gods and goddesses with trees owe their origin to one of the most primitive forms of cult, that of tree-worship. It is clear, also, that in very many cases mythology may be truly described as savage science rather than as savage religion, consisting in early man's answers to the question why certain natural phenomena take place. Hence that numerous class of myths, found in nearly all nations, relating to the rising and setting sun.

This, then, is the second fact which modern research has established, the supreme importance

of cult, the relative insignificance of belief, or myth.

3. The third result, on which also we find unanimous agreement, is the wide prevalence of that particular form of cult which we term sacrifice. The case may be perhaps fairly stated thus: While cult itself is absolutely universal, known and practised in every tribe and nation of which we have any knowledge, and as far back as our knowledge of human customs extends, the sacrificial form of cult, although of world-wide occurrence, cannot with quite the same certainty be described as universal without qualification. We cannot know, for example, whether man of the early Stone Age offered sacrifices, and the same uncertainty, for different reasons, attaches to the religious rites of the Australian aborigines. In this latter case, however, we may perhaps trace the germs of the sacrificial idea in three directions: (I.) In the rite of circumcision if, as some authorities hold, one of the meanings of the rite is to enter into a blood-covenant with the god, or more correctly perhaps with some vaguely conceived numen of the tribe; (II.) in the solemn and sparing eating of the totem animal by the members of the totem group, before the other members of the tribe are allowed to partake of it. This is especially significant if Robertson Smith's theory

of the totemistic origin of sacrifice, of which we shall have to speak directly, be admitted, and we may note that this custom is to be sharply distinguished from the magical ceremonies for increasing the supply of the totem, which take place much earlier in the year; (III.) certain ceremonies which appear to have for their object the establishment of a union of blood between the members of a totem group and the totem, as when blood is allowed to flow from an opened vein on the Sacred Kangaroo rock. If these instances be allowed to partake of a sacrificial nature, then there is no exception, as far as our knowledge extends, to the universal prevalence of sacrifice.

The modern division of the many varieties of sacrifice is threefold:

I. Honorific—where the aim is to please the god by an offering of the nature of gift or tribute; or to express the feelings of homage or worship which the community entertains towards its divine protector.

II. Piacular—where the community (more rarely, as in Israel, the individual) believes that it is under the ban of the god's displeasure, and seeks to avert his wrath and avert or remove some calamity by an offering. That is, the aim here is to restore the normal relation between the human worshippers and the deity, which

owing to some cause or other, has been interrupted.

III. Sacramental—where the object is to enter into communion with the god, either (*a*) by sharing the sacred meal with him, or (*b*) by actually feeding upon the god, through partaking of the flesh or the grain which is believed, by having been offered in sacrifice, to have become identified with him, or charged with the divine life.

We may also conveniently divide sacrifices into: I. Those which are wholly consumed in the service of the deity, as is, for example, almost universally (not at Rome) the case with peculiar offerings, and with the whole burnt-offerings familiar to us through the Old Testament; and II. those in which the worshippers share.

The above threefold classification has been criticised. But it is when we come to the all-important question, What was the origin, the primary meaning, of sacrifice? that we are no longer on the solid ground of unanimity among all the specialists in comparative religion, and have to choose, if we can, among conflicting hypotheses. Did sacrifice originate as a gift or tribute to win the favour of the god? Or was its first intention to appease his anger? Or was it, from the very beginning, an attempt to enter into communion with him, and so partake

of the divine life? Or, again, did it originate in a darker rite: the slaughter of the priest-king, the predecessor of "the priest who slew the slayer, and shall himself be slain"? Fortunately the task of deciding is not necessary for our purpose, nor is it even advisable. For if our ultimate intention be that of ascertaining the true significance of cult, and thus testing its value as the basis of an argument for the reality of its object, it would be a grave mistake to build upon an hypothesis which may be overthrown by advancing knowledge.

This, however, we can say with confidence, that the whole intention of the sacrificial rite is always, as it must have been from the very first, to establish a friendly relation between the worshipper and the object of his worship, god or spirit or numen. Of necessity, as Professor Jevons says ("Evolution of the Idea of God"), the aim is not merely to bring an acceptable offering, but to make the offerer acceptable. In this general, undefined sense, communion is of the essence of sacrifice.

This remains true, whether or not we adopt Robertson Smith's theory of sacrifice as being originally the killing of the totem in order that it might be eaten by the clan, as a means of sacramental communion with the divine. Totemism is a very early, though not primitive,

mode of human thought. Essentially it consists of the idea of kinship between a class or group, and some species of animal or plant, coupled with the belief of some power, other than human, residing in that species. So on the solemn occasion of the clan sacrifice, one member of the totem species is slain, or in the case of vegetable totems, is solemnly offered, and wholly consumed by the tribe, in order to cement their union with god or spirit (who is identified with the species as a whole) and with one another.

Many anthropologists reject this view as an explanation of the *origin* of sacrifice. But there is no doubt that it does receive some support from what we know of the solemn eating of the totem by the totem-group in Australia, a custom to which allusion has already been made. At any rate, the association of sacrifice and the sacramental meal is very widely spread, thus illustrating what we have said of the curious similarity of cults all the world over.

And because it is just here that this similarity is profoundly impressive, and because this association is so important as throwing light upon a meaning, if not the original meaning, of sacrifice, that it will be worth while to enumerate some striking instances, from different periods and widely separated regions.

We place first the ritual eating of the totem

in Australia, which we have already mentioned. Here we may once more remind ourselves of two points: (a) This rite is altogether to be distinguished from the spring "Intichiuma" rites, which are magical in character, and have for their object the increase of the totem; (b) that the eating in question is ceremonial in character is shown by the fact that the men of the totem-group eat only sparingly of the totem (kangaroo, witchety grub, etc.), and that before the other members of the tribe partake. In culture, the Australian aborigines belong to the Stone Age.

From Australia we pass to ancient Mexico. The principal feast of the Aztecs was in the month of May. Two days before, the sacred virgins made out of dough, compacted of maize, honey, and beet-seed, an image of the god Vitzilipuztli, to which on the feast day worship was offered. At the feet of the idol were laid cakes of the same materials. After the ceremonies, whereby these cakes were consecrated to be "the flesh and bones" of the god, the people partook of them fasting, and the holy food was carried to the sick. At other times, the blood of a human victim was mingled with the dough, and it is significant that the victim in question had been for months previously chosen and designated as the representative of the god,

and honoured as such. It is scarcely surprising that the Spanish conquerors of Mexico should have seen in such a ceremony a Satanic parody of the Mass.

But, in an earlier age, Christian writers had said the same thing of the worship of Mithra, that formidable rival, in the early centuries of our era, of the new religion. There the initiated partook of a "sacred communion of bread, water, and possibly wine."

In the old Greek world, such sacramental meals were known, as in the horrible rite of the eating of raw bulls' flesh in the worship of Dionysus and the partaking of the sacred grain in the mysteries of the great Earth Mother at Eleusis.

In the most ancient worship of Latium, afterwards transferred to Rome, that of the primitive heaven-god, Jupiter, on the Alban Mount, a white heifer was slain, and "the flesh was divided among the deputies of all the Latin cities, who thus placed themselves in some mystic relation to their great divinity, at the same time renewing the solemn covenant of alliance with each other." "We are here in the presence of the oldest and finest religious conception of the Latin race, which yearly acknowledges its common kinship of blood, and seals it by partaking in the common meal of a

sacred victim, thus entering into communion with the god, the victim, and each other."

It is curious to find in St. Paul an allusion to the heathen idea of communion through sacrifice and sacred meal, and an express parallel to the Eucharist: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (1 Cor. x. 21). At this point, it should be remembered, we are only collecting our facts. The vast extent of the custom of the sacramental meal, and its resemblance to the Christian Holy Communion are very curious facts, but we must postpone to the close of this chapter the attempt to find out an explanation for them.

We may trace in a different connection this idea of entering into communion with and so sharing the very life of the god as one of the meanings of the sacrificial rite. For primitive races, the blood is a symbol of and identified with life. Hence the sprinkling with the blood of the victim is the imparting to the worshipper of the divine life, and the establishing of a bond of union between him and the god. We have seen the beginning of this in Australia.

The most familiar instance of this practice is the record of the great covenant-sacrifice in Exodus 24, where Moses, after the reading of the

law, sprinkles the sacrificial blood on the altar, the book, and the people, thus establishing for all time the covenant relation between Yehovah and Israel.

One more point may be added before we leave, for the present, the subject of sacrificial cult, and that is, the intensely social character of early religion. While private rites are performed, chiefly in connection with the great crises in the life of the individual, when he enters, as it were, on a new kind of existence, hence known as "rites de passage," the sacrificial act is almost always the approach of the community as such to its god. The individual (as shown, for example, in the case of the blood-feud, and the judgment passed on Achan and his family) is lost in the household group, or the clan. While modern religion emphasises the relation of the individual soul to God, such an idea scarcely appears in ancient times. An attempt of a single member of the tribe to perform sacred rites would bring him in most cases under suspicion of practising magical arts with some nefarious intent, as, for example, that of injuring an enemy. The idea of the worth of the individual as such, even, we might almost say, of his very existence as a separate unit, was very late in making its appearance. The modern view of personality is largely due to the influence

of Christianity with its tremendous stress on the value of the single human soul.

4. A fourth result of the study of comparative religion in more recent times has been the discovery of what Mr. Andrew Lang terms "high gods of low races." All our authorities would not agree on the significance of them, and some would be inclined to question certain parts of the evidence, but that traces of a belief in a Supreme Being are to be found in savage tribes, at a remote distance from each other, is a fact which does not admit of question, and hence may be included among the certain and agreed results of modern investigation. We proceed to give a few striking examples.

To begin once more with the aborigines of Australia, among the Yuin and other tribes on the coast, Daramulan is the supreme deity, whose name is only divulged at the initiation mysteries; at other times he is known as "Lord" or "Father." He is dreaded as "one who could severely punish the trespasses committed against these tribal ordinances and customs whose first institution is ascribed to him."

And, it should be added, among these ordinances are instructions of extraordinarily high moral elevation, given by the elders to the youths of the tribe.

Bunjil is the All-Father of the Wotjobaluk

and other tribes. He is spoken of as "Our Father," and is considered to dwell beyond the sky. Baiame occupies this position among the Kamilaroi. "At the Bora (initiation) ceremony he is proclaimed as the 'Father of all' whose laws the tribes are now obeying." There are many other examples from different parts of the continent.

Among the Fuegians, a tribe in a very low state of savagery, a "great black man" is supposed to dwell in the woods, who is not propitiated by food or sacrifice, but punishes breaches of the moral law, as the slaying of a stranger. In the case of the Andaman islanders, supposed for a long time to be "godless," has been found a god, Puluga, "like fire," but invisible. He is the creator of all, and reads the thoughts of men's hearts. He is angered by falsehood, theft, etc., and is the judge of men beyond the grave.

To pass to races higher in the scale, the Zulus, "a ghost-worshipping race without a god," have a faint tradition of a supreme being, Unkulunkulu, the Creator, who was before death came, to whom no worship is offered, and now is to them but a shadow of a name.

In China is to be found, among a host of religious ideas of a contrary tendency, the conception of a supreme divine power. "The

oldest forms of religion in China militate against the popular assumption that first animism and then images preceded the more spiritual monotheism of what is believed to be the most recent form assumed by religion." "Four thousand years ago there was no trace of religion of a degraded form, and there was a distinct conception of a supreme deity, who was worshipped without temple or idol, in the open air." Still, at the present day, "the devotions of the Sovereign are paid to the Supreme in the open air."

Similarly, it has been maintained that even in India, "where the choking growth is of polytheism and fetishism, the original worship was monotheistic," and that this idea is still in the back of the mind of the religious Hindoo. Flinders Petrie is of the opinion that monotheism was the first stage in the religion of ancient Egypt, in spite of the enormous growth of polytheism.

Last, and perhaps most attractive of all, is the cult of that ancient sky or heaven god of the earliest Latin race, the Jupiter worshipped in the open air on the Alban Mount, before the Etruscans came and built his temple, the worship which, it may be, the Latins brought with them from their prehistoric settlements in Northern Italy.

It should be understood that all this is only a small collection from a vast amount of evidence from the most varied sources, and that this evidence presents everywhere the same general features, of a belief, sometimes operative, more frequently faded out and all but forgotten, in one supreme being, coexisting with other beliefs and practices belonging to lower strata of religious thought, as ghost-worship, fetishism, and polytheism.

Such, then, are some of the results, and, for the most part, agreed and established results, of the study of comparative religion. Before we try to estimate their significance for our main argument, we must touch briefly on certain questions of definition, which are very important as bearing to some extent on the question of the origin of religion.

First, then, and most important of all, what is meant by the term "religion"? Professor Marett speaks of the need of a definition of religion that makes it "coextensive with cult." Can we find such a definition? The nearest approach to it is that quoted from Howerth by Mr. Warde Fowler in his "Religious Experience of the Roman People": "Religion is the effective desire to be in right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe." This has the merit which we seek in all definitions;

it includes all cases which can be covered by the word we are seeking to define. It embraces every manifestation of religion, from the rites of the Australian aborigines to the most sublime utterances of human aspiration towards communion with the unseen. One and all they exhibit man's deep-seated desire, expressed in a thousand ways, and showing every degree of effectiveness, to place himself "in a right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe." No better definition of religion has ever been put forward, but it is open to doubt whether it is absolutely "coextensive with cult." For some forms of cult seem to be better described as "magical" rather than as "religious."

As is well known, Professor Frazer holds that an age of magic preceded the age of religion. But what are we exactly to understand by magic? And wherein is it differentiated from religion? Does the difference simply lie in the conception of the powers which are to be propitiated or to which a means of approach is to be sought?

This view has been held, but wrongly, as it seems to the present writer. The real distinction lies in the mental attitude of the person as he performs the rite. To quote once more from Warde Fowler's great work, by magic "we are

to understand the exercise of a mysterious mechanical power by an individual, whether man, spirit, or deity, to enforce a certain result." In magic there is no propitiation, no prayer. "He who performs a purely magical act, utilises such mechanical power without making any appeal at all to the will of a supernatural being." Religion, on the other hand, is an attitude of regard and dependence; in a religious stage man feels himself in the hands of a supernatural power with whom he desires to be in right relation." It is true, of course, that magic, so defined, does imply "a ruder and more rudimentary idea" of the Power or powers manifesting themselves in the universe, but the true difference lies in the fact that magic seeks to compel these powers to conform to the human will, while religion aims at winning their approval, making them propitious, in its highest form, of uplifting the human will into conformity and union with the divine. "Thy Will be done" is the truest expression of the religious spirit in its highest manifestation.

In magic there is nothing of the feeling of awe (*religio*) and dependence which is of the very essence of religion. That magic and religion existed side by side, as in fact they coexist to this day even in Christian countries, so that it is sometimes hard to know whether a given rite

should be described as magical or religious, is not in doubt. That different and even contradictory dispositions may be present at the same time in the same mind does not stand in need of proof, and is indeed a matter of not uncommon experience, and it is much disputed whether Professor Frazer's idea of an age of pure magic, preceding the dawn of religion, is not an entire misinterpretation of the facts.

But the important point is that they are different in kind, so that while it is possible that magic and religion may have both developed out of rude and undifferentiated ideas of the relation of man towards the Power manifested in the universe, religion as such cannot have been evolved out of magic pure and simple. Closely connected with this latter view is the idea of some anthropologists that religion in its earliest form consists of a series of more or less successful attempts to get rid of angry ghosts. It is known that some kinds of cult have to do with the placation of the spirits of the departed. But (i) we may be quite sure that so vast and complex a system as cult cannot be scientifically assigned to one simple cause; (ii) a very large number of instances points to the conception of the mysterious powers surrounding human life as actually or potentially friendly; (iii) the evidence is overwhelming that cult has arisen,

time after time, in the feelings evolved in man by natural objects; (iv) the widespread belief, found even in Australia, and in savage races of almost equally low culture, in supreme gods "who have never been men and have never died"; and the coexistence of such beliefs with the fear of ghosts and the worship of deified ancestors are proofs that we shall not find either in the placation or the worship of the dead the universal cause of religion.

Some have regarded religion as developed out of animism, not merely, that is, the belief in spirits of the departed, but that natural objects, or some of them, possess a soul (*anima*), or will and personality analogous at any rate to that of man. Some of them appear to stand out from the rest, as startling or formidable, and here arises the belief in what, for lack of a better word, may be termed their divinity, and, out of this belief, springs the desire to enter into friendly relations with them, by sacrifice or other means.

But it is now admitted that animism belongs to a later stage in savage thought than that of the beginnings of magico-religious cult.

That is to be sought in a cruder and more primitive conception.

Certain objects, animate or inanimate, probably at first on account of a weird or uncanny appearance, or from their being simply unac-

countable to the savage mind, are conceived of as being endowed with a mysterious power or influence. To this the convenient Melanesian word "mana" is applied by modern anthropologists. An object or person possessing mana to an unusual degree is sacred. The negative side of sacred is "taboo," indicating the dangerous aspect of mana. "Around the conception of mana gathers all the fundamental principles of savage religion. In short, it is hardly too much to say that it covers the whole of magico-religious phenomena. It is sufficiently vague to describe those early religious ideas before the conception of personality entered into the savage consciousness, and at the same time it is capable of existing in combination with a doctrine of spirits, souls, ghosts, and anthropomorphic beings" (James, "Primitive Belief and Ritual"). The writer from whom this quotation is taken points out the impossibility of deriving the All-Fathers of Australia from animistic (still more, it would appear, from pre-animistic) conceptions, as they are viewed as magnified, non-natural men who have never died. This brief review of some opinions as to the origin of religion supports our belief in the sufficiency of the definition of religion which we have adopted as "the desire to be in right relation to the Power manifested in the universe."

That the Power should have been conceived of very dimly and crudely at first is precisely what we might have expected.

We have now to try to gather up our results, and to inquire what hypothesis may best explain the universal existence, in so many varied forms, of this desire. And the first point to notice is this fact of its universality. It belongs, we may say, to human nature as such. This is proved by the universality of cult, in which the desire finds its expression. From this point of view, the diverse ways in which the desire manifests itself are of comparatively little importance. In the earlier stage there would appear to have been a fusion of magical and religious elements lying, as it were, side by side, and not yet clearly differentiated. This seems more probable than the theory that there was a stage of pure magic, followed by one of religion which finally expelled magic from the authorised cults. For if there is any sense in which we can speak of the evolution of religion, we may assume that it would probably be roughly analogous to what we know of evolution elsewhere, which proceeds by way of increasing differentiation from what is not yet differentiated. Further, even in the most advanced and spiritual religions, we can detect survivals of the old magical idea of compelling the Divine Will to conform to human desires by

appropriate acts and words. Again, the existence of the desire to be in a right relation to the Power or powers manifested in the universe is independent of the vast variety of beliefs which have been held in regard to the nature of the Power. The theory that the common basis of all religion is the fear of ghosts is inadequate to explain all the phenomena. It does not account, for example, for those "high gods of low races" who are conceived of as never having been mortal men.

The same objection applies to the older theory, which would trace all religious observances back to the single type of primitive ancestor-worship.

It is this desire to be in right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe which is the broad fact which modern research into comparative religion has revealed to us as a universal attribute of human nature, and which must be the starting-point of our restatement of the venerable "argument from general consent," and not any supposed unity of belief. That desire, in fact, has much deeper roots in human nature than the assent of the mind to any form of creed. It is "a permanent underlying psychological impulse" which lies at the root of the crudest savage rites and the highest spiritual religions. It demands, therefore, an explanation which goes deeper than the theories

enumerated in the last paragraphs. Such an explanation must needs be of the nature of an hypothesis, not in the sense of an unverifiable assumption, but in the scientific sense as defined in our first chapter, of a theory which is capable of holding together all the facts, as giving a rational and coherent account of them. Here, the facts to be accounted for are the existence of this universal and deep-rooted desire, and the innumerable forms of cult and belief in which it has expressed itself, or to which it has given rise. A fact of secondary but great importance is the extraordinary similarity of some of these manifestations, under circumstances which preclude borrowing, such as the belief in high gods, and the wide spread of sacrifice and the sacramental meal.

There is a well-known Christian doctrine which seems in this case to fulfil the conditions of a satisfactory scientific hypothesis. It is the old doctrine of the Logos, the Divine Word or Reason, as taken over into Christianity, and there made fundamental, in the prologue to the Gospel of St. John. If man as such is sustained and enlightened by the indwelling of the Logos, the Life of nature and the Light of men—"the Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world"—then it is possible to see in his long and varied religious history a

progressive revelation from within of the divine in man, to which, or rather to whom, he owes both his rational and spiritual life. The revelation has been, on the whole, progressive, but not without its sad declines and terribly dark phases. "The Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not," did not avail to extinguish it. Further, this hypothesis has the merit of yielding an explanation of the remarkable similarities of cult and belief to which allusion has been just made, and which have been illustrated in the early part of this chapter. Such a phenomenon is precisely what we should expect, if the central doctrine of the Christian religion be true, that "the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us." The religion of the Incarnation, the satisfaction of man's age-long, universal desire for union with God, must needs exhibit many affinities with earlier types of religion, for it is the same Light which is revealed in them "in many parts and in many ways," and the Incarnation is His fullest, divine-human manifestation. At this point, we cannot forbear quoting a beautiful passage from Professor Jevons' "Introduction to the History of Religion": "Sacrifice and the sacramental meal which followed on it are institutions which are or have been universal. (We should now say, very widely prevalent.) The sacramental meal,

wherever it exists, testifies to man's desire for the closest union with his god, and to his consciousness of the fact that it is upon such union alone that right social relations with his fellow-man can be set. But before there can be a sacramental meal there must be a sacrifice. That is to say, the whole human race for thousands of years has been educated to the conception that it was only through a divine sacrifice that perfect union with God was possible for man. At times the sacramental conception of sacrifice appeared to be about to degenerate entirely into the gift theory; but then, in the sixth century B.C., the sacramental conception woke into new life, this time in the form of a search for a perfect sacrifice—a search which led Clement and Cyprian to try all the mysteries of Greece in vain. But of all the great religions of the world, it is the Christian Church alone which is so far the heir of all the ages as to fulfil the dumb, dim expectation of mankind; in it alone the sacramental meal commemorates by ordinance of its Founder the divine sacrifice which is a propitiation for the sins of all mankind."

Such, then, is the new form in which the old "argument from general consent" appears. It supersedes the old form, inasmuch as the idea of a progressive divine revelation from

within is both more consonant to our modern thought and to the facts of early man's mental and spiritual life which modern research has disclosed, than the theory of a communication from without of a definite body of religious truths in a primitive age. It is also more consonant to the glimpses we are permitted to have (on the theistic view) of God's dealings with mankind in general. And our hypothesis fulfils the critical test of a scientific theory, in that it gives an adequate, coherent, and rational explanation of all the facts, which, so far as we can see, no other hypothesis succeeds in doing. For those who hold the Christian creed, and especially to disciples of the Johannine theology, it has the supreme merit of regarding all the religions of the world as forming, in some sense, an organic and living whole, which finds its consummation in the final revelation of God to mankind in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Logos.

CHAPTER IV

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

THIS argument is so-called because one of the forms in which it is stated is this: that which has begun to be, must have a cause sufficient to account for it; the universe, or cosmos, must have had a beginning; therefore it must have had a cause, which can only be found in God.

Now, this argument cannot be said to be a very strong one, for its major premiss, that the universe must have had a beginning in time, is an assumption for which it offers no proof. No reason is given against the supposition that the universe may be eternal. And the materialistic hypothesis, however discredited it may now be, cannot be disposed of by the simple assertion that the only sufficient cause of all is God.

So we come to a second way of stating the argument from causation. Every event or thing must have a cause; but this cause is itself an effect of another cause, by the same law; and thus we are led to an infinite succession of causes,

each of which, in turn, is an effect. But such a succession, or "infinite regress," as it is termed, is inconceivable. We are, then, forced to believe in the existence of a Cause at the end of the chain, which is not itself an effect. And to this uncaused Cause, in which our minds can alone find rest, we give the name of God. This argument, therefore, claims, from a consideration of what is involved in the law of causation, to give us the conception of God as the First Cause.

This is certainly a much stronger position than the former, and the reasoning at first sight seems to be unanswerable. For all that, closer inspection will show that it is exposed to very serious criticism, both from (I.) the philosophical, and (II.) the theological standpoints. We will consider both these criticisms, and if they should prove, as we believe they do prove, to be well founded, endeavour (III.) to decide whether the argument from causation should be given up, or whether it is capable of restatement in a form less exposed to attack.

I. The argument thus stated bases itself on the Law of Causation, that every event, or thing, must have a cause sufficient to account for it. Its philosophical weakness is, that it takes this law for granted as an *a priori* truth—that is, a truth somehow prior to, and superior to,

experience, to which experience must conform. Is this assumption justifiable? Now, causation is one of the categories of thought, such as space, time, and substance. Here we have three points to consider: (1) The function of the categories; (2) their origin, whether they arise as a product of experience, or, as it were, stand outside it as *a priori* truths or concepts; and (3) the character of this particular category of causation.

(1) The function of the categories.

Before determining this, we must try to fix a meaning for that most fluid and ambiguous term, experience. One of the great difficulties in the study of modern philosophy consists in ascertaining the exact meaning in which a writer uses the word. Hence, it will be well to state, once for all, in what sense we are going to employ it in this essay. Experience, then, we shall take to mean the entire content of our consciousness. In other words, it constitutes the universe as known to us, and other sentient beings of like organisation with ourselves. How it is that all human beings do experience, within narrow limits, the same universe, is a problem on which we shall not enter here. That the fact is so cannot be doubted, on the grounds of common sense. Other beings, with different organisations, say with different sense-organs from ours, would doubtless experience a different universe.

Supposing, for example, that the sensory nerves of sight and hearing which we possess were connected with other brain centres, we might be in the position of seeing sounds and hearing colours. So we can, more easily, conceive of creatures with vastly greater, or differently developed powers of sensation, who would be able to distinguish sights and sounds to us invisible and inaudible. There is another metaphysical question, one view of which we shall here take for granted. Experience without an experiencing subject appears to us an impossible and contradictory conception. We shall therefore range ourselves on the side of those philosophers who hold that the subject-object relation is the essential thing in all experience.

Now there is one outstanding fact with which we are at present concerned. Our experience is never a mere random collection of impressions derived from our sense-organs. On the contrary, its chief characteristic lies first in this, that it is a coherent and organised system. But coherence and organisation are the work of mind. This is the supreme merit of Kant, to have shown the activity of the mind itself in the work of perception. The mind is not, as Locke called it, a *tabula rasa*—a blank surface upon which the outer world makes impressions. Our universe,

our experience, is, as we have said, very far from being an unsorted jumble of sense-impressions. We may imagine, indeed, that in lowly stages of development the contents of mind are limited to sensations received from without.

But the human mind, at least when the earliest period of its growth has been passed, is at every moment active in arranging sensations into the systematic and therefore intelligible world which we know.

And its instruments in bringing order out of chaos are such "categories" as time, space, substance, and causality. This, then, is the invaluable function which the categories perform in the growth and formation of experience.

(2) The origin of the categories.

Here we have a different question. Without the categories, experience, as we know it, would be impossible. But to lowlier forms of mind doubtless simpler types of experience correspond. Modern ideas of growth, and the recent science of genetic psychology, forbid us to think of the mind starting on its task of systematising its experience already, from the very beginning, fully equipped with its apparatus of categories. It has been shown how these, in fact, have developed as the result of interaction of mind with the materials presented to it. Hence they have a double relation to experience, as being at

once products of it, and, in its later stages, the instruments whereby it is fashioned into ever more coherent and intelligible forms. Further, their sole justification is found in this their success in the systematisation of experience. We are thus led to reject the view that they are *a priori* to experience itself, or in any sense stand outside it. We agree with the view of those who hold that there are no such things as *a priori* truths. The discovery and verification of all truths lie within experience, and to place ourselves outside of experience is not merely an impossible feat; the words have no meaning.

(3) The category of causality.

We are now ready to apply both the foregoing considerations to the specific category of causality, which is the one which at present interests us.

(a) Causation is, like the rest of the categories, a mental construction. It is an idea, which is now part of our mental equipment, which we bring with us to our interpretation of the ceaseless changes which we observe around us. It has become an innate idea.

The question most often on the lips of a child is, Why? The child, equally with the man of science, rejects the thought of an event or thing entirely isolated from all other events or things.

The answer to the "why" is, the assertion of some causal connection between the object of our inquiry and something else. The answer which the child makes, or the savage makes, may be grotesquely wrong. The shower of rain may be attributed to the charms of the medicine man of the tribe. But, for all that, we never doubt that there is a true answer to be found. The "why" is the fundamental question always, for child, or savage, or scientist.

In other words, causality is one of the instruments essential to the work which the mind is for ever carrying on, systematising its experience, making its world more and more intelligible, assimilating the outward to itself.

(b) Genetic psychology leaves us in no doubt as to the origin of the category of causality. This can only be found in our experience of our own activity. Self-activity is the source of our notion of cause; let us trace the steps whereby the notion arises.

(i.) We—and by this "we" is to be understood the human mind at an early stage of growth—become aware of our power to push an obstacle out of our path, to move our own limbs, to cause movements in other bodies, and probably we become aware of our powers in the order given.

(ii.) In the next stage, we attribute by analogy

the idea of power to various objects round us. The primitive theory of "animism" carries this analogy very far, and inanimate objects are endowed with a personality similar to our own. They are considered as active, as producing movement in other bodies, in the same way in which we produce such movements.

(iii.) From this the interval is very short to the common conception of cause and effect. If B regularly follows A, then A is the efficient cause of B—that is, it makes B to occur.

(iv.) But in an age of scientific reflection, a refinement or abstraction takes place in regard to the view taken of the causal means—that is, the relation between cause and effect.

The notion of activity is abstracted from this relation, and that of sequence is alone left. A cause now appears as the antecedent condition, or, rather, as the sum of the antecedent conditions.

A certain school of scientific thought at the present time proposes indeed to discard the idea of force altogether. Movement we know, and can measure its rate and ascertain its direction, but what have we to do with this unknown thing called force? These authorities would discard the conception altogether, as a piece of mythology, as a lingering trace of the old animism. When we say that a certain concurrence of

phenomena, A, B, C, is invariably followed by a phenomenon D, then A, B, C are the cause of D, and this is all we should mean, it is maintained, by the word "cause." Thus, according to this view, causality is only another name for uniform sequence, for the orderliness of the universe.

To this view we shall return later. The one point which it is important for our present purpose to have clearly in mind is that beyond all doubt the origin of the category of causality is our experience of our own activity.

Now, how do all these facts about the categories, and the category of causality in particular, bear on the cosmological argument, the argument from the Law of Causation to God as First Cause? In the familiar statement of that argument, which we set forth at the beginning of this chapter, the law of causation is assumed as an *a priori* truth: the idea of causation is, without criticism, assumed to be beyond and above experience, something which we bring with us to the interpretation or explanation of experience, and from which we can argue to the ultimate constitution and origin of the universe.

Now, any argument we are able to use at all must arise out of some fact or facts within experience. The point is, not that the cosmo-

logical argument is dependent upon experience, but that it assumes that the category of causation is independent of it. Again, the very point of the argument is that an "infinite regress of causes" is impossible—impossible because inconceivable. To this, two replies may be made. (a) It does not at all follow that because a thing is inconceivable, in the sense that it cannot be presented as a distinct idea, therefore it cannot be. Anything can be, that is not self-contradictory. (b) The argument is simply an assertion that the universe is not infinite. This may be true, but a serious argument cannot be based on an assertion for which no proof is offered. Thus, the infinite regress is not disproved because we cannot conceive of it; and the objection to it conceals an unproved assumption about the universe.

II. We next take up the theological criticism of the cosmological argument as commonly stated. The conception of God as First Cause is exposed to two criticisms:

(1) God is, on this view, a member of a series. He is the first member, it is true, and without Him there would be no series at all. Yet, all the other members have their existence independently of Him except as regards this original impulse. Now God, as one of a series, must necessarily be finite. It is true that some of

our most distinguished philosophers—as Mr. F. C. S. Schiller—do at the present day hold this opinion. Perhaps the strongest argument on their side is that we must necessarily attribute will to the Divine Being, and will implies resistance to be overcome. But this difficulty can be overcome by the idea of a self-limitation on the part of the Infinite God, involved in the very act of Creation. The question to be made clear is, What is meant by the ascription of infinity to God? Quite certainly, it is not meant thereby that He has not a definite character, that in His case, as in the case of all moral beings, there are not acts which are impossible to Him.

God cannot lie. In whatever sense, then, we call Him infinite, the word cannot mean the absence of all limits. So far as we can see, there are two kinds of limitations which we can ascribe to God: (*a*) those which are due to His nature; and (*b*) those which are due to the action of His will. Ultimately, no doubt, these two are one, for the Divine nature and the Divine will cannot be separated. But if God can rightly be called finite in this respect, that is very different from imputing to Him that kind of finitude which would make Him but one of a series. The distinction seems to us to be just that between “a God” and “God.” And by

the latter term we mean the Being who is not only the starting-point but the ground of the whole series and also its goal. This appears a valid objection to the conception, as commonly understood, of God as First Cause.

(2) But a more serious criticism is that on this view God is separated entirely from the sphere of "Natural Causation." In technical language, His transcendence is emphasised to the exclusion of His immanence; we have, that is, deism, not theism. There are three possible views of the relation between God and the world.

(a) Deism—the view that God is altogether transcendent; that is, above and outside the universe. He made it, and then, as it were, stands off from it, as a mechanic might contemplate a machine which he has made. Any further dealings of God with the universe are of the nature of interferences in order to repair or readjust the machine, and such interferences are what we call miracles. Or, again, some deists would deny that any such interferences take place. Such a theory is unsatisfactory, for the reason that it makes an hypothesis which, from its own point of view, is unnecessary. For if the universe can thus run itself, why bring in the hypothesis of God at all, instead of assuming that it is eternal? The answer made to this would no doubt be that a machine implies

someone who made it. But one which can work itself is no longer a mere machine, especially if it is capable of evolving life and intelligence by its own unaided efforts. And the assumption that it was so made as to be able to work in this marvellous way is not more improbable than the assumption that it was not made at all. On the other hand, if we are in earnest about the doctrine of Divine interferences, we are faced by a very awkward predicament, owing to the fact that the advance of modern physical science has had a constant tendency to close up the gaps to which the doctrine in question appealed. As the sphere of "natural" explanation has been steadily extended, the occasions where it was felt necessary to invoke the Divine interference have *pari passu* become fewer, so that the result has been that the more we know of nature, the less reason we find in it for God. Acceptance of organic, and many would now add inorganic, evolution is consistent with pantheism, or agnosticism, or Christian theism, but hardly with the old deism.

(b) Pantheism—the view that God is simply immanent, excluding transcendence altogether. He is, in fact, regarded as identical with the sum of all being. This view leads to the denials either of nature or of God, in practice usually

the latter. Now pantheism is open to the fatal objection that it confuses altogether distinctions which are fundamental both for reason and conscience: between truth and error, good and evil. For if God be all, then each thing equally is part of Him, and in the same sense reveals His nature. The most godlike act of virtue, the meanest and most heinous crime, are both alike manifestations of the divine. There is left no test by which one can be shown to be preferable to the other, if both are parts of God. Truth and illusion, the man of science unravelling nature's secret places, the savage sunk in lowest and most degrading superstition, are on the same level of divinity. And, of course, to believers in any sort of freedom, pantheism is an impossible theory; for all actions are necessitated, being all the acts of God. No doubt, in its various forms, pantheism exercises a wide attraction, and has a peculiar fascination for the modern mind. But in the end its downfall is assured, when once the confounding of all rational and moral distinctions is seen to be involved in it. Here is no resting-place, only a halt, long or brief, on the road to theism or atheism.

(c) Theism, the specifically Christian view of the relation of God to the universe, seeks to combine the two attributes of transcendence

and immanence. God is regarded as being distinct from His universe, exalted above it as its Creator and Ruler, while at the same time He is in every part of it, by His Word and Spirit, the indwelling principle of its order and life and development. As the whole of this Essay is an attempt to exhibit the rationality of Theism, few words need be added here. Only, we do want a clear idea, which we are seldom given, of what is exactly meant by immanence. In what sense can God be said to be "in" the universe? Canon Temple, in his book on "The Nature of Personality," has said that to speak of an immanent Will is nonsense, but that we may rightly speak of the Divine meaning and purpose as immanent in the world. But this does not seem to lead us much farther. Immanent meaning and purpose do not appear to mean anything different from meaning and purpose without the "immanent"; the adjective is unnecessary. We hope, however, that our restatement of the theistic argument from causality will carry us a little way towards gaining a clearer idea of Divine immanence. So far, then, the cosmological argument is exposed to a twofold attack: from the philosophical side, as being founded on an uncriticised view of causation; on the theological side partly as giving us a finite god, partly, and chiefly, as

separating Him from the sphere of natural causation, and thus being exposed to the objections justly brought against the deistic position.

III. Restatement.

Two courses are open: (a) The rejection of the argument altogether; and (b) examination of the possibility of restating it in a less vulnerable form. We believe that the second course will yield a satisfactory result.

What we have to do is to take up once more the question of the meaning of causation, using the materials collected in the first part of this chapter. There we saw that the idea was developed out of our experience of our own activity. We are conscious of our power to move external obstacles, and our own bodies, and so come to attribute a similar power to the objects which surround us. Thus, derived originally from self-activity, the "category" of causation comes to be an inherited part of the structure of our minds. In a race of intelligent beings, who were purely passive, destitute of all initiative and activity, the idea of causality could never arise. Their universe would be an entirely different one from ours, a painted picture, a world lacking just those characteristics of activity, of ceaseless flow of energy, which are the distinguishing marks of the world

we know. But we saw, in the second place, that the progress of scientific thought was tending to substitute for the idea of active causality that of uniform succession. "Cause" has come to mean the sum of antecedent conditions. Causation in this sense is but another name for the orderliness of the universe.

The question now presents itself, Is this the whole account of the matter? Are we to see in causation nothing but sequence? The answer is to be found in the view we take of the relation of the human mind to its own experience. The category of causation, like the other categories, is no doubt the creation of mind, but is it a case of creation out of nothing? Is our feeling of activity merely a delusion, caused by a bodily movement following upon the presentation in consciousness of the idea of the movement? If experience is the final court of appeal, it seems decisively to reject this view. In "forcing" my body to get out of bed, or to perform some other uncongenial task, I am aware of self as an active agent, as much as I am aware of anything in the world. It is only in the interests of some academic theory that I can even regard this clear verdict of consciousness as an illusion. But if so, I am justified in concluding that a similar activity is at work in the world around me. In the vast though

slow movements whereby the natural world, inorganic and organic, in the midst of which I live, and of which I am a part, has been built up, am I to see nothing comparable to the movements of my own body, but only an orderly procession of phenomena? That there is no sense in which one phenomenon can cause another, in the sense of making it to exist, we freely admit. But if movement in the case of my own body has my own will for its inner side or meaning, then either a similar but greater will is the inner side and meaning of the movements of nature, or else the idea of causality is not due to the interactions of mind with the materials presented to it, but that mind not merely interprets but creates its own world, and creates it out of nothing. That the universe, as known to me, is another name for my experience we have already maintained. But it is a quite different, and wholly incredible, supposition that it is nothing but the creation of my own mind, and that the categories of my thought are wholly spun out of that thought itself, and have nothing which corresponds to them in a Reality which both transcends and includes my experience.

Here, then, is our restatement of the cosmological argument. For the purpose of scientific description no concept of efficient cause is

needed; all we are called upon to do is to ascertain the order, grouping, succession, which obtain among the infinite variety, and, before science has unravelled it, the bewildering and confused mass of phenomena. But when we inquire into such questions as meaning, when we ask the eternal "Why?" we cannot rest in the idea of succession simply. Our hypothesis here is, that just as we only directly know the meaning, the why, of one class of movements, namely, those of our own bodies, and there that meaning turns out to be the activity of will, so, in regard to the movements we observe, or infer, in the natural order external to us, it is most rational to assume that in these, too, the activity of will is implied. We are parts of the universe, and, infinitesimal parts as we are, the characteristics of the vast whole are yet reproduced in us. The microcosm is the true, however inadequate, reflection of the macrocosm.

According to this view, causality is another name for will. God is not First Cause, but the Only Cause. So-called natural causes are not efficient causes at all, but the signs, the outward and visible signs, of how, on any given occasion, the will of God is going to act. The physical universe is a sacrament of which God is the inward part, the Reality.

As we have not only admitted, but insisted,

this and other theistic arguments are hypotheses—that is, they are incapable of demonstration. But if they help us to a rational and self-consistent view of the universe, this is all we require of them. This particular hypothesis, that by causality is meant the working of the Divine will, has the peculiar advantage of giving an explanation both of the ultimate origin of the “category of causality” and of the scientific view of causation. Our own activity is the reflection, or reproduction in miniature, of the reality of which the universe is the outward expression, and the category has arisen as the result of the interaction between the mind and that reality, while the uniformity which science reveals is due to the orderly or rational working of a will informed by the Supreme Reason. Once more, this interpretation gives a clear idea of what is meant by the Divine immanence. God not only transcends His universe, but is active in every part of it, and “natural causes” in all their endless variety are the signs and symbols of that activity.

Briefly, we have now rested the theistic hypothesis, not on the supposed impossibility of an “infinite regress” of causes, but on what, we believe, is involved in the conception of causality itself.

Two difficulties on this view remain: (a) The

relation of the Will of God to other wills; and (b) the problem of evil. These we postpone to a later chapter.

Meanwhile, we claim for our hypothesis that it has the merit of giving a rational and coherent explanation both of the rise of the category of causality in the human mind, and of those appearances in the external world which that category has been evolved to interpret.

CHAPTER V

THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

THIS argument, otherwise called the "Argument from Design," is one of the most discussed, as it is perhaps the most interesting, of the so-called "proofs of the Being of God."

It is based, as the name implies, on the evidence of purpose, or design (*τελος*, an end), in nature. It will perhaps help to place the matter in a clearer light if we begin by examining two very general statements which have been made in regard to it.

1. A very common remark in works on Apologetics is, that it is more correct to speak of the argument *to* rather than *from* design, for, if design be once established, we must admit the existence of the designer—that is, God. Thus, the only question would be, whether we find in nature the reality, or only the appearance of design. At this point, we may well lay down at least a provisional definition of the term. By "design," then, we understand a combination or arrangement of certain elements in order

to produce a foreseen result. In the simplest case, A and B are combined, in order to produce C. This obviously implies an intelligence, a mind, to which the idea of C was already present as a necessary result of the combination, and present also, as a desirable result, a thing to be aimed at. It implies something else, too—namely, the activity of a will which was able to effect the combination and so to bring about the result. No actual case in nature, of course, is nearly as simple as the one supposed. For example, in the eye of the higher animals we have a very intricate mechanism, the combination of a very great number of elements, in order (apparently) to produce the very desirable result of vision. The remark which we are criticising implies that there are, in this and countless other instances, only two alternatives: either the combination of elements is due to mere chance (we shall, later on, have to discuss the meaning of this word), or to the action of a Supreme Mind and Will regulating and organising the system which we call “nature.” Without, for the moment, entering upon this discussion, we may here state that the alternatives are not two only, as is assumed, but three. That which has been omitted is the possibility that the “stuff,” so to speak, of which the universe is composed is itself intelligent, or made up of an indefinite

number of more or less conscious beings, the "monads" of Leibniz. In some form or other, this idea is rather widely prevalent to-day in certain circles. Professor Ward, in his "Realm of Ends," has argued that it may well be consistent with theistic belief. But obviously it does not necessarily involve such belief. Thus we shall have to consider the claims of "Pluralism," as this view is technically called, as well as those of "Chance" and "Theism."

2. In the second place, we may briefly notice Kant's well-known criticism of the teleological argument. We cannot logically argue, he urged, from any number of instances of design to an Infinite Designer. From finite premisses, only finite conclusions may be drawn. We can wholeheartedly admit the justice of this, without impairing, in the slightest degree, the validity of the argument. The real questions lie, as we have seen, first, between intelligence and the absence of intelligence, secondly, between one intelligence and many. Supposing we are led to the conclusion that the facts really point to one Supreme Intelligence, then the question whether this intelligence be rightly called finite or infinite, so far as this argument will take us, must remain an open one. From the premisses, so far we must agree with Kant, we cannot conclude that it is infinite, but neither can we

infer the contrary. And the matter does not seem to be one of vital, or even of very great importance. If Nature be directed by a mind so vast in its scope and energies as to include and penetrate the universe, then, whether this mind be finite or infinite does not appear to make much difference, and very possibly may be unmeaning. We would here refer back to the discussion in the last chapter on the idea of a "finite God." We only repeat here that if by infinity be meant the absence of all limits, then this would seem to imply also the absence of all definite character.

We now turn to the examination of the two main questions: I. Do the facts point to real, or only apparent, design in Nature? II. If we are led to the conclusion that design does really exist, that there is clear evidence of purpose, have we any grounds for inferring the existence of one Supreme Intelligence which designs and purposes, or shall we have to leave open the alternative of many intelligences, or, perhaps, a generally diffused intelligence? Our method must be, as before, to interrogate the facts which science has revealed, and then, following the path which science itself has traced for us, inquire which of these hypotheses will give the most coherent and rational explanation of the facts.

I. Design in Nature, is it real or apparent ?

A. The facts which seem to point to design.

If we start from our definition that design is the combination of two or more elements in order to produce a foreseen result, we find, at once, that the whole of the organic, and at least a considerable part of the inorganic, world exhibits at any rate the appearance of design. We will take the latter case first, for it presents the problem in a peculiar way. In the separate parts of the inorganic world, it would be difficult to point to any evidence of design, while, viewed as a whole, as a process, it does seem to suggest irresistibly the idea of purpose. The age-long process by which the earth was fitted to become the habitation of living forms, the gradual cooling of our planet, the distribution of land and ocean, the disintegration of the rocks into soil, appear at any rate to be stages in a development which had the production of life as its calculated and foreseen result. Still, we cannot call this evidence conclusive. We could not give an answer, or, at least, an absolutely convincing answer, to the objector who should urge that things might so have happened, in accordance with physical laws, as to present the appearance of a process intended to make our planet the abode of life. We must defer consideration of this point, for the present only

remarking that, as far as we have gone, the latter alternative does not present more probability than the former.

But when we turn to the organic world, we discover that every single fragment of the vast whole, with inconsiderable exceptions, which may possibly turn out not to be exceptions at all, presents us with the appearance of design. For there is no single structure in plant or animal which has not a definite function—that is, some end to fulfil in relation to the life of the organism as a whole—or which did not have such a function in some previous stage in the development of the species. We may take one example of the latter class of instances. The present rudimentary hind-legs of the whale have obviously now no part to play in the economy of that animal. But their existence points to the time when they functioned in the usual way, when the far-back ancestors of the whale were land animals, progressing on dry ground. In order to present the argument in a clearer and more definite way, we will select some typical classes of facts which, in the organic world, seem to point to the operation of design, which appear, at any rate, to show purpose at work.

(I.) The first and most familiar instance is the mutual relation of organ and function, a

relation which is the most obvious, as it is the most universal fact in the organic world, and which is, indeed, the characteristic of that world. To set forth this argument in its fullness would be to write a complete treatise on biology. Each member, or organ, of the living whole, or organism, whether plant or animal, has its definite part to play in the maintenance of the life of that whole, as regards its own internal structure, and in its relation to the environment. This adjustment of organ and function extends far below the limits of our unaided vision, as in the cases (to take two obvious examples) of the internal mechanism of the ear of the higher animals, and the stomata, or breathing-organs, in the leaves of plants.

(II.) Our second class of examples which present the appearance of design includes the numberless instances of special structures which have apparently been developed to meet some special need, and is, accordingly, a subdivision of our first class. Under this head we may place (*a*) protective coloration and imitation, as in the leaf-insect: (*b*) the marvellous mechanisms of many plants with the view of securing pollination: (*c*) such structures as hairs on the stems of plants, to guard against the attacks of insects: (*d*) specialised weapons of defence, as the poison fangs of snakes and the stings of

insects. And these groups, each embracing innumerable individual instances, are taken at random from the infinite variety of the organic world.

(III.) Our third and last example of apparent design shall be one of the most remarkable processes which nature presents, one which at any rate it is almost impossible to describe except in terms which imply the action of purposive intelligence. I refer to the regular succession of defined stages by which the fertilised ovum or egg-cell develops into the mature animal. Experiments have been made, notably in the case of the sea-urchin, which show that the process exhibits a certain self-repairing, self-regulating power in the organism. Artificial hindrances, within certain limits, can be overcome.

Each step in the development constitutes a definite advance towards the end, the production of the adult creature. We may or may not accept the view propounded by Samuel Butler, and adopted by some biologists, that the explanation is to be sought in a kind of unconscious memory latent in the organism. At any rate, in this universal phenomenon of the organic world, it is extraordinarily difficult to assume the operation of a blind mechanism rather than that of intelligence working towards

an end. After this very brief survey of a vast field, we may now consider rival explanations of these facts in nature which appear to point to the presence of design—that is, of intelligence.

B. Does evolution enable us to dispense with design ?

I. THE EVOLUTION HYPOTHESIS.—There are two rival hypotheses to account for the innumerable varieties of plant and animal life which to-day people our planet. The first is that of special creation, that each species is now what it was created at the beginning of the world. The second is that of evolution, that all the present species are descended from one or a few very primitive forms of life. The point to be borne in mind at the outset is that both of these views are equally hypotheses. No one can maintain to-day that Genesis, however lofty the inspiration of its writers, as shown in their profound spirituality, and the lessons concerning God and man there taught, which can never be outgrown, is meant to be a textbook of science; while, on the other hand, it is equally necessary to avoid being dogmatic on the scientific side. The only test of the validity of an hypothesis, as we have said again and again, is that it gives an intelligible account of the facts, that it enables us to view them as a coherent and rational whole. And applying this test, it has become

overwhelmingly clear that the hypothesis of evolution must be preferred to the hypothesis of special creation. The following is a summary of the chief reasons which have led to this conclusion.

(a) The actual structure of organisms exhibiting relationships with each other, nearer or more remote, according to which they are grouped into species, genera, families, orders, classes, phyla, and kingdoms, can be most intelligibly explained as due to descent from common ancestors, near or remote. For example, it is not possible to doubt that the dog and the wolf, the cat and the tiger, owe their likeness to the fact of common descent. Nor is it rational to stop here. The same principle can be applied, with equal rationality, to the wider groups, as carnivora, herbivora, mammals, vertebrates. "The tree-like form assumed by a natural classification bears an unmistakable resemblance to the tree-like development of the whole organic world which evolutionists believe to have taken place. The two results represent, indeed, but slightly different aspects of the same truth; the resemblance between them is no mere coincidence, but the fact that we are able to classify organisms in a tree-like manner indicates very clearly that these organisms have been produced by tree-like evolution."

(b) The embryos of the higher animals recapitulate, roughly, the various stages through which their far-back ancestors passed on the evolutionary theory. In technical language, ontogeny (the development of the individual) is a summary of phylogeny (the development of the race). Owing to various causes, the correspondence is not exact. But it is scarcely possible to explain the broad facts of embryonic development except on the "recapitulation hypothesis." For example, all the higher animals begin life as a simple cell, which proceeds to multiply by division, quite in the manner of the protozoa, or lowest members of the animal kingdom. These cells do not lead a separate existence, but remain together, at first without any differentiation of structure or function, like a protozoan "colony." A little later, we have an arrangement with a two-layered envelope of cells lining the digestive cavity, technically known as the gastrula, which represents the stage next above the protozoa, the coelenterata, of which order jelly-fish, corals, etc., are members. There follows the stage of segmentation, recalling the worms and their allies. And, above this, all reptiles, birds, and mammals pass through a fish-like condition, with gill-slits and gill-arches, some of which are obliterated, while others are modified to form the aortic arch and

the great arteries which supply the head and fore-limbs.

As we said, the correspondence is by no means perfect in detail, but it is sufficiently close to recall a rough outline of the development of the animal kingdom as a whole, according to the evolutionary theory. Moreover, the embryos of different vertebrate types, however widely the adult animals vary from each other, resemble each other very closely up to a late stage in their development. A similar state of things prevails in the vegetable kingdom. As an illustration, we may take the common gorse, where the leaves of the adult plant are modified to form spines, while those of the seedling retain still the unmodified, ancestral form, somewhat resembling those of the clover. Thus, "the life-history of the individual is essentially a condensed epitome of the ancestral history of the race."

It should, however, be added that the "recapitulation theory" is rejected by some eminent biologists and convinced evolutionists, as, for instance, by Huxley and Professor A. Sedgwick, while, on the other side, we have to place such names as Haeckel and Weismann. "It may be," says Sedgwick, in "Darwin and Modern Science," "that these organs"—*i.e.*, rudimentary ones in the embryo which disappear in the

adult—"never were anything else than functionless, and that though they have been got rid of in the adult by elimination in the course of time, they have been able to persist in embryonic stages which are protected from the full action of natural selection."

(c) *Evidence from "Vestigial" Organs.*—These are organs which are of no possible use now, and are therefore only intelligible as survivals from some ancestral form, in which they did perform some definite function. Such are the splint bones in the legs of the horse, a survival from the three-toed stage of its evolution; the teeth in the whale embryo, later replaced by whale-bone; the hind-legs of the whale, already referred to, and the rudimentary hairs on its skin; the appendix in man, now functionless and often a source of disease and danger; the pineal gland in the human brain, which can be traced back as one member of a second pair of eyes in some early reptilian form, and, in fact, in the tuotara of New Zealand, the oldest surviving type of land vertebrate, the eye-structures, lens, retina, and nerve are retained, though even here the organ is rudimentary and functionless, being $\frac{1}{50}$ inch in diameter and deeply buried beneath the skin. The impossibility of an alternative explanation of such "vestigial" organs is a

very strong confirmation of the evolutionary hypothesis.

(d) *The Evidence from Geology*.—The “imperfection of the geological record” is a commonplace. The earliest types of life, whatever they may have been, are completely obliterated. And the chance of any given organism being preserved in fossil form has always been a remote one. All the more remarkable, then, is the fact that “the higher groups of animals and plants have appeared on the earth in exactly the order which we should expect on the assumption that each has arisen from some preceding and more lowly organised ancestral group.” The following table exhibits the earliest known occurrence of the various types, arranged in chronological order:

Cambrian.	Invertebrates.
Silurian.	Fishes.
Carboniferous.	Amphibians.
Permian.	Reptiles.
Triassic.	Mammals.
Jurassic.	Birds.
Pleistocene.	Man.

In outline, this scheme represents the order of appearance according to evolutionary theory, with the exception of mammals and birds. But this presents no difficulty, inasmuch as the fact

that the earliest discovered birds belong to the Jurassic does not preclude their existence at an earlier date, and the occurrence of a type of primitive mammal in the Trias is not undisputed. The earliest human remains, as the Heidelberg jaw, and the Piltdown skull, may possibly be Pleiocene. The general succession of forms, from the invertebrates up to man, is sufficiently impressive. But the geological evidence is not confined to the exhibition of a general order of the appearance of successive forms of life on the broad scale. It is, however, very difficult to make a selection from such a mass of detail. Perhaps it will suffice to mention (i.) the discovery of "generalised types," as the archæopteryx, an earliest known bird form, which retains such reptilian features as teeth, and a tail composed of about twenty separate vertebræ; (ii.) the actual tracing of the evolutionary pedigree of the horse in the tertiary deposits of North America.

Such, in briefest outline, and with omissions of great importance (such as the proofs from protective coloration, reversion to type, geographical distribution), is the evidence which has led to the rejection of the special creation hypothesis, in favour of that of evolution. But it is important to notice, that what the evidence commits us to is not the acceptance of any

particular theory, Darwinian or Lamarckian, or any other, of evolution, but the adoption of the evolutionary hypothesis, to the general theory of "descent with modification" as the preferable hypothesis to that of special creation, for the reason that it does give, as the former fails to give, a coherent and intelligible explanation of the facts.

II. THE THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION.—For the sake of clearness of thought, it is important to keep this distinct from the general theory of evolution. For it is, as it were, a theory within a theory, or hypothesis subsidiary to the doctrine of descent. None the less, it is through this secondary theory that evolution has won such wide acceptance. And this is so for a very simple reason. Evolutionary theories are far older than Darwin, for they may, in fact, be traced back to the Greek philosophers. But it was the supreme merit of Darwin, that he traced evolution to the work of causes which can be shown to be in actual operation to-day, and so effected what is perhaps the greatest revolution in thought which the world has ever seen. It may perhaps be sufficient to give a short summary of Darwinian doctrine and then indicate some points in which that doctrine has been outgrown or modified. The main factors in evolution, according to this view, have been: (a) The

enormous fecundity of plant and animal life, and the consequent struggle for existence. For example, supposing that each pair of birds produced young only four times in their lives, then in fifteen years each pair would have increased to nearly ten millions, for very few produce less than two young ones each year, while many have six, or eight, or ten. The common flesh fly, if it were to multiply unchecked, would give rise to a hundred billion descendants in three months. In greater or less degree, all organisms tend to increase in a geometrical ratio. (b) The struggle for existence. Now, it is quite obvious that in every case some check is interposed on this natural rate of increase. This check takes very various forms, as the attacks of other animals, or crowding out by other plants, the influence of inclement weather, the necessary limitations of food supply. Each species, each individual, has to struggle to maintain its existence. (c) Variation. No two individuals are ever alike. Every one presents some slight variation from type. Now, it is obvious that those individuals which vary in a direction which gives them any advantage in this struggle will survive, while their less fortunate companions will perish. (d) Heredity. These favourable variations being handed down by inheritance will tend to accumulate.

Where interbreeding is prevented, by some natural check, or geographical isolation, we shall have a new species, differing in more or less important respects from the parent one. And this probably will occur again and again; has, in fact, according to this theory, occurred unnumbered times in the vast periods of geological history; and the result has been the extraordinary variety of plant and animal forms which now inhabit our earth. To this process, the main but not (according to Darwin himself) the only factor in evolution, the name of Natural Selection has been given. This name is, in one respect, happily chosen. For it stands for the idea that nature very slowly, and during the course of long ages, acts in a similar manner to the breeder of animals, who habitually selects individuals having some particular characteristics from which to breed, and thus produces a race which has that characteristic in perhaps a very intensified form. For example, the enormous variety of domestic pigeons has by this method been produced from a common type, the blue rock-pigeon of India. From another point of view, the term is apt to be misleading, on the side of undue personification of "Nature." Strictly speaking, there is no active selection, as in the case of the human breeder. Individuals with unfavourable or without favourable varia-

tions simply die out. A still more ambiguous phrase is "the survival of the fittest." This does not mean at all necessarily those of the highest type, but simply those most fitted to a particular environment. We may take a very obvious illustration. The human race, and our plant and animal contemporaries, are proved to be the fittest by the mere fact of survival. But suppose our present environment to become entirely changed, as, for example, by the advent of another severe glacial epoch. Then, mosses and other arctic plants might be the only denizens of earth, and these, in their turn, would be equally good examples of "the survival of the fittest." "Fitness," in this sense, means only a certain relation to the environment.

Even this brief summary of the Darwinian theory would be unjust if we did not repeat that Darwin himself, in distinction from some of his followers, never held Natural Selection to be the only factor in evolution. His own words are: "I am convinced that natural selection has been the main but not the exclusive means of modification." He admitted the Lamarckian factor of the use and disuse of parts, and to some small extent, the direct action of the environment, and the rise of spontaneous variations, now more generally known as "mutations."

III. AFTER DARWIN.—It will suffice perhaps to give a mere outline of the directions in which thought on this subject has developed since the epoch-making work of Darwin. (a) In the first place, we record those discoveries, or theories, which, however great their biological importance may be, have only an indirect relation to our subject, which is the bearing of evolution on the design argument. Thus, on the one hand, we have the school of neo-Lamarckians, who follow Lamarck (some fifty years before Darwin) in upholding the inherited effects of the use and disuse of parts as the most potent factor in evolution, and the school of neo-Darwinians, laying more stress than their master on the agency of Natural Selection and altogether denying the inheritance of “acquired characters,” with Weismann at their head, so famous for his researches into the microscopic foundations of life. Again, there should be recorded the rediscovery of Mendelism, which is revolutionising our ideas of heredity. Finally, we have the “mutation” theory, especially associated with the names of de Vries and Bateson, which holds that the key to evolution is to be found, not, as Darwin maintained, in minute “continuous” variations, but in greater and more abrupt, or “discontinuous,” variations, the so-called “mutations” which give rise

suddenly to the emergence of new species. Some of these discoveries and speculations give promise of recasting, to a great extent, our ideas of evolution. But we are compelled here to pass them by with this cursory mention, and to hasten on to what is perhaps a more subtle change, or changed direction of thought, which is more germane to our purpose. (b) There does seem to be a growing tendency among men of science, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, a growing school of scientific thought, which lays particular stress on the activity of the organism itself in its response to the environment. "Adaptation is the very essence of organism." This phrase of Professor Burdon Saunderson might serve as a summary of the position. Of course, it goes without saying that adaptation has always been one of the foundation-stones of the evolutionary edifice. But in practice, an insistence upon its importance is found to be compatible with a very mechanistic view of the organism, the ascription of variations to "chance," and the reduction of physiological processes to the operation of physical and chemical laws. The school with whose views we are now dealing, however, regards all organisms, even the lowest, as possessed of a certain self-directive power, so that their activities cannot be wholly described in terms of physics

and chemistry. We may mention such works as Driesch's "Philosophy and Science of the Organism," J. S. Haldane's little book on "Mechanism, Life, and Personality," and, on the philosophical side, Bergson's "Creative Evolution," as illustrating, from various points of view, this tendency. It would not be correct, in spite of the title "Neo-Vitalists," to speak of Vitalism in this connection. For the term suggests the exploded notion of a mysterious entity called "vital force," which belongs to the same order of discarded ideas as the ancient "caloric." Rather, the conception is, that organic life represents a distinct category. The laws of physics and chemistry are illustrated in all organic actions, but there is also present an element which is not reducible to them. "What we have found," says Haldane in the work referred to above, "is that the conception of the living organism is in common ordinary use, and differs radically from any physical conception. . . . There is no *a priori* reason why we should not, if it helps us, take it as the fundamental conception for biology, just as the physicist takes the conception of matter and energy as fundamental for physics."

The standpoint of this modern school is well summarised by Professor Pringle-Pattison in "The Idea of God," Chapter IV., in the following

sentences: "The autonomy of life, or the independence of biology, means, as I interpret it, that physical and chemical categories are superseded throughout—that we pass to another range of conceptions altogether, if we wish to describe accurately the behaviour of anything that lives. Strictly speaking, there is no 'inorganic happening' in any living creature. We may, of course, by the ordinary method of scientific abstraction, isolate different aspects of what happens, and usefully study organic processes, at one time from a purely physical, at another time from a chemical, point of view. But such accounts do not represent anything independently real, as if we had a set of facts into which life enters, and which it proceeds to manipulate. The organism as 'an autonomous active whole,' every function of which is centrally or organically determined, is the only conception which suffices to describe the biological facts; and however mechanistic a physiologist may be when he is working at the details of specific movements and connections, he will be found recurring instinctively and unavoidably to this fundamental conception as soon as he begins to speak of the physiological fact as a whole in its proper nature, and to discuss, for example, the fundamental phenomena of assimilation, growth, and reproduction."

Along with writers of the school of thought whose views are represented by this extract, we have mentioned M. Bergson. This is obviously no place for a detailed discussion of the Bergsonian philosophy. One remark only will be made in this connection. Bergson is at one with the biologists who, like Haldane, insist that organic activity is not explicable in mechanical terms, that biology is more than a branch of physics or chemistry. But he goes far beyond this, and seeks to determine the cause of all evolution in an original impulse, the *élan vital*, which is in reality life or consciousness ever striving to mould matter to its own purposes—that is, in the direction of indetermination or freedom. Bergson is, however, no dualist, for matter itself is a product of an “inverse movement” of consciousness. Into this difficult speculation we do not propose to follow him, as it would lead us too far astray from our immediate subject. But it is very relevant to this to note one of his arguments in refutation of the idea that natural selection by a purely mechanical action, acting, that is, on merely chance or haphazard variations, can account for the infinite complexity of living creatures. He points out that, even in microscopic detail, the eye of the mollusc and that of the vertebrate closely resemble one another. This result has been

attained along two very different lines of evolution, starting from the pigment spot of the infusoria. And he points out the absolute impossibility of conceiving that an identical result could have been reached both along the line of development which produced the molluscs, and that which culminated in the higher vertebrates, by the simple accumulation of a vast number of happy accidents.

It is of very great importance to notice the agreement, along such various lines of thought, of many eminent authorities, that life, and the evolution of life, cannot be explained by merely mechanical categories. This is not one of the least significant movements of post-Darwinian thought.

We have thus endeavoured to set forth a brief summary of the hypothesis of evolution. First, we have had before us the grounds for preferring this to the hypothesis of special creation, in a brief summary of some of the "proofs of evolution." Then, we considered how the theory was placed on a firm foundation, and gained an immensely wider acceptance, through the work of Charles Darwin, inasmuch as he showed how evolution in the past proceeded by means of forces which can be traced in the world to-day, above all, by the action of natural selection on the products of variation and heredity. Lastly,

we very shortly reviewed some of the leading results of thought applied to this subject since the time of Darwin, and the resulting changes in the conception of evolution.

We now turn to consider the bearings of this theory on the Argument from Design.

IV. NATURAL SELECTION AND THE DESIGN ARGUMENT.—It has been argued that the acceptance of natural selection as the principal agent in evolution enables us to dispense with design—that is, intelligence—in Nature altogether. When, for instance, the eye of the higher animals could be regarded as an optical instrument, fashioned as it were from outside for the purpose of vision, Paley's argument was unanswerable. When, however, the eye is regarded as having its origin in a mere pigment spot in certain infusoria, just capable of discriminating between light and darkness, and as having through long ages developed its present structure by almost insensible increments, the case is altered. It is still more altered if these increments be regarded as chance variations preserved in each case by the action of natural selection—that is, owing to the accident that each of these variations placed its possessor in a somewhat more favourable position in regard to its environment.

Now on this, several criticisms may be made.

(a) In the first place, as has been often observed, natural selection gives no account at all of the origin of variation. It assumes the facts of variation and heredity, but makes no attempt to explain them. The nearest approach to such an explanation has been made by Weismann, who traces them back to differences of nutrition in the primarchial elements of the cell. But, in the first place, this is what Hartog terms a "formal hypothesis"—that is, only a restating in other words of the problem to be solved, not really an explanation or simplification of it. And, in the second place, it only presents us, in place of the first, with a second series of variations, which themselves will have to be explained. And to speak of "chance" variations is simply to give up the attempt to solve the problem, to surrender as hopeless its prospect of a rational solution of "the riddle of the universe." For "chance" seems here to mean the negation of law, or rationality altogether, and to admit chance in this sense is to cut away one of the foundations of natural science, which is bound to assume, as its working hypothesis, the rationality of nature from beginning to end.

If, however, by "chance" we simply mean the action of some law, or laws, of whose nature we are, and possibly always will be,

in ignorance, in this sense we may indeed admit the existence of chance, though the name is most unhappily chosen, for the reason that, in thus using it we can hardly avoid associations from the first, and most common usage, creeping into our minds. But here again we have no explanation, but the abandonment of explanation.

(b) Even assuming that natural selection has been the sole or chief factor in evolution, how were the earliest variations, those too small to possess "survival value," preserved? Admittedly, not by natural selection, which can only act when this stage is reached. And if the theory cannot account for the foundation, how can it account for the superstructure which rests upon it? But supposing evolution has not taken place by minute variations, as Darwin supposed, but by leaps and bounds—supposing, that is, we adopt the theory of "mutations"—we shall have the further difficulty of answering the question, How did these mutations arise, and why have they all taken a certain direction? Moreover, still keeping to our typical instance of the eye, we have the insuperable problem propounded, as we have seen, by Bergson, What has brought about precisely the same result along two such distant and utterly distinct lines of evolution as those

which have resulted respectively in the production of the mollusca and of the highest vertebrates ?

(c) But in fact, as we have seen, a considerable school of scientific thought since Darwin declines to allow to natural selection even that importance which he assigned to it as a factor in evolution. And, in particular, we can range here all those authorities who claim for Biology a unique place in the hierarchy of the sciences, who claim for her the right, while using the results or the categories of physics and chemistry, to employ a distinctive category of her own to interpret the phenomena of life; who stand for the principle of "the autonomy of the organism." From this point of view, the organism is no longer a more or less passive piece of mechanism, entirely at the mercy of the environment. It not merely actively responds to the environment; this active response is its very nature, its essence, as an organism, that which constitutes it as such. Variations, or some variations, are the expression of this active, vital response. If this be so, then the whole case against design, or teleology, founded on the supposed supremacy of Natural Selection interpreted mechanically, falls to the ground. Not, indeed, in the sense that any proof has been given, so far as the argument has gone, of a Supreme External

Designer. But we have now at least cogent reasons for believing in the existence of an "immanent design" in nature. Organic life, if its essence be response, the striving for a niche in the scheme of things, the overcoming of difficulties, the securing of a certain fulness of life, already seems to involve a psychical factor, may we not say exhibits at least the rudiments of cognition and will?

We have no doubt that natural selection has played, in fact is playing, an important part in the development of living things. But that part is a negative one. It explains the elimination of the unfit, not the production of the fit. We must reject its claim to be an alternative to the action of intelligence in nature, even if we are not convinced that that action has yet been conclusively made out. For, in the first place, the staunchest advocates of the omnipotence of natural selection again and again are found using the altogether non-mechanical language of adaptation, in spite of themselves, as it were, slipping into terms of teleology. And, in the second place, natural selection, which has to assume such vital facts as variation and heredity, however great its importance as a factor in evolution, cannot sustain the burden which it is sought to force upon it, the task of explaining the evolution of organic life on our

planet. We leave to professed biologists the ascertainment of its true rôle. Neither from the point of view of science or of philosophy is it entitled to rank as an all-embracing, all-explaining hypothesis.

We have thus seen reason to give a negative answer to the question, "Does evolution necessitate the abandonment of design?" if we at least take design in its widest sense, as denoting the operation in nature of factors which at any rate seem to be akin to intelligence and will. For so much is involved in the rejection of the omnipotence of natural selection viewed as mechanically acting upon chance variation.

We shall presently see that there is much more to be said. Meanwhile, let us note that the conceptions of "adaptation as the essence of organism," of "the organism as an active autonomous whole," of biology as an independent science, using the categories of physics and chemistry, but also employing a unique category of its own, do imply the existence and operation, the continuous existence and the constant operation, in the world of life, of a non-mechanical factor which can be best described as psychical. Once admit an adaptive action in the strict sense, and we have cognition and will, in however rudimentary a form. True,

when we read of the unicellular protozoa adopting "the method of trial and error," we are indefinitely below the distinct conception of an end and the conscious striving towards its realisation. But we do have the dim beginnings, the first germs of these things, and, therefore, perhaps still more obviously, of feeling also, the vague feeling, it may be, of want, of discomfort, and their removal. But the relation of this factor of intelligence, rising in clearness and in complexity as we ascend in the scale of life, to the "design argument" is still to seek. Just at this stage of the argument, however, it is sufficient to remark that this newer type of evolutionary theory renders necessary the assumption of some psychical element in organic nature. But we are under no necessity to stop at this point. A broader view of the implications of evolution will enable us to attain to a firmer grasp of the nature and working of this element.

V. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION, AS BEARING ON THE DESIGN ARGUMENT.—We have thus seen that evolution does not enable us to dispense with intelligence, that, on the contrary, it seems to demand at least an immanent intelligence as a working factor in organic life. We may go as far as to call it the working factor, inasmuch as it constitutes

the differentia of organic, as contrasted with mechanical, processes. This is so, of course, if we follow the teaching of those evolutionists who attach its full value to the word "adaptation." We now leave behind us the consideration of all special theories of evolution, neo-Darwinian (natural selection), neo-Lamarckian (use and disuse), or any possible blend between them, and simply regard evolution, in the broadest sense, as a scientific hypothesis. We saw that there are weighty—most modern thinkers consider conclusive—grounds for preferring this to the rival hypothesis of special creation. We do not, it should be needless to add, mean to beg the question as between the two, by the use of the term "scientific." Special creation and evolution are alike hypotheses, and each must stand or fall on its own merits. The only reason for preferring the latter must be that it appears to supply a more intelligible and coherent account of the facts. Most people, indeed, with or without scientific training, are evolutionists, in so far as the natural modern tendency is to regard the present state of the world, or at least of the living beings who people it, as the outcome of a long process of development. Few, for example, would now maintain that the several species of the dog or cat tribes were specially created. After all, each of us as

individuals is the result of a development from a single cell. And evolution is but the interpretation of the world-organism on the same lines as those on which we know individual organisms do in fact develop.

What, then, is implied in a world process which starts with a minute speck of protoplasm and culminates in the rational life of man? To attempt to answer this question is to essay to found a philosophy of nature on evolutionary science. Aristotle is here our best guide. For he gave an answer which is applicable to all views, ancient or modern, which regard the world as a process. "The first step," he wrote, "is not the germ, but the finished product" (*τὸ πρῶτον οὐ μὲν σπέρμα ἀλλὰ τὸ τέλειον*).

If we take this as our test, what does it exactly mean, and how are we to translate it into modern terminology? Shortly, we may state the matter thus: If in fact, man as a rational and moral being has appeared as the product of an age-long process, then the lowest and simplest stage in the process, and each succeeding stage, at least on the line which leads up to man, must be interpreted in the light of its end. The process has been such as to issue in rational and moral life. Man is not to be interpreted by the amoeba, but the amoeba

by man. We do not, of course, regard man as in some mysterious way included in his "proto-plasmic ancestor," any more than the individual is included in the ovum from which he comes. We are not guilty of the "Chinese puzzle" idea of evolution. But the only tolerable explanation of a process which issues in rational and moral life is the presence at each stage of a rational and moral principle, not, as it were, as a spectator, but as a real, active, energising cause, originating and guiding the long course of development.

VI. The acceptance of the evolutionary hypothesis does not then overthrow the "design argument." But it does change its character, and the change is fundamental. We cannot now build upon particular instances of design, however numerous and striking. For we have been, as it were, liberated into a much wider sphere, and enabled to survey the world process as a whole. The result of our long discussion has been to compel us to regard nature as a process which displays throughout the working of a rational and moral principle. At this result we arrive on the sound philosophical rule that the nature of a process is only manifested in its end, or, perhaps we should say, is more clearly displayed in its later than in its earlier stages. It is not, as we said before, that the end

is in some mysterious fashion included in the beginning. A process must be viewed as an organic whole, unified by being regarded, as it is only truly regarded, as the manifestation, in time, of a single principle which is immanent throughout. But the real character of that principle is only gradually disclosed, and fully disclosed only in the final stage. Nor does this involve an isolation of the last term, as if it were independent of the process which has brought it about, as if man, in the present instance, should be considered as independent of nature. It is rather that in man we can most truly discover what that nature is, of which he is an inseparable part. We may take another illustration lower down in the scale.

It has not yet been proved that life originated from inorganic matter. The view was held, by the older apologists, that here we have an instance of a direct intervention by God, life having been, as it were, inserted from outside. Professor Flint, indeed, in his "Theism," regards a proof to the contrary, if ever it should be forthcoming, in the light of a death-blow to theism, or any form of belief in God. Yet a theology which thus builds upon "gaps" in the scientific explanation of the world is in a very dangerous and insecure position. As a matter

of fact, the theory of continuity is so strongly held in modern times, and so weightily supported by analogy, that it has become incredibly difficult to believe that such gaps as are left are real, and not merely apparent, being due to the deficiency of our knowledge. We are coming to see that, if the divine is really to be found in nature, it must be looked for, not in sudden and abrupt interventions, but in the process of world-becoming as a whole. But if the simpler forms of life did in fact originate (as possibly they are doing at the present day) from the suitable collocations of inorganic material, colloids or the like, then this will mean, not the degradation of our conception of life, but the raising of our conception of the inorganic world. We shall be forced to admit, as most thinkers to-day are coming to admit, that the popular idea of "dead matter" is misleading. We shall regard the inanimate in the light of that which has issued from it, that which it had in itself the potency to become. Here, again, we shall be interpreting the earlier stages of the process by the later, in which for the first time their true character is revealed.

But, if we thus regard nature as displaying throughout a rational and moral principle or life, which is most clearly manifested in and to ourselves, this does not yet give us the God of

religion. It does yield a teleological conception of the world, as exhibiting purpose or will, and therefore intelligence and desire, a conscious striving (or a striving which is continually becoming more conscious and aware of itself) towards an end. But the question has still to be faced, How are we to describe the relation of this principle to the cosmos, the universe which it indwells, and which is its manifestation under conditions of time and space? And to this question three answers, and only three, can be given.

I. It is the universe, the whole, which is itself conscious, purposive, rational. This is the answer of Pantheism.

II. The universe is composed, and wholly composed, of a vast number of intelligent and sentient beings, of every degree of intelligence and sentiency. This is the answer of Pluralism, which may, or may not, be combined with (III.).

III. The universe is the creation (in whatever sense) of a Rational Being, who indwells it, as the principle of its rationality and progressive activity (hence, is ever creating), but is also transcendent, the rich fulness of His life being not exhausted by its temporal and spatial manifestation. This is the answer of Christian Theism.

It may, of course, be objected that three other solutions are possible—namely, those which are offered by Agnosticism, Materialism, and Deism. But of these, the last two can hardly be described as living theories. To-day it is hardly necessary to offer an elaborate refutation of the view that “matter” is a self-existent entity, apart from its relation to a perceiving subject.* And in the following chapter we shall deal at some length with the theory that consciousness is merely a by-product of certain material changes.

Again, the notion of God as altogether external to the universe, as having no more vital or intimate connection with it than that of the engineer with the machine which he has constructed, is altogether repugnant to our modern conception of Him, and is, we believe, definitely disproved in advance by the whole line of argument sketched above. Agnosticism is by no means a dead theory. Essentially, it is the assertion that not only do we know nothing, but that, from the circumstances of the case, we can know nothing, of the ultimate principle of the universe. But as far as the foregoing argument has gone to prove the existence of conscious striving towards an end—that is, of intelligence and will, as permeating the

* For the “New Realism,” cf. Gore, “Belief in God,” pp. 51, 52.

universe, and imparting to it, in fact, its specific character as a process or becoming, we have, to that extent, disproved the agnostic contention.

Pantheism, Pluralism, and Christian Theism are the only three answers consistent with this view of the universe. But they are, each of them, equally consistent with it. Hence we have to inquire what other grounds there may be for making our choice between them.

I. Pantheism is not merely a widespread theory, ranging from the ancient religious systems of the East to the most modern philosophy. It is one which, as far as we can see, is destined to survive and to continue to exercise a potent fascination on inquiring and devout minds. Shortly, it may be described as the assertion of the Divine immanence in the cosmos, to the exclusion of transcendence, or the view that God is wholly included (to use a spatial metaphor) within the universe. Even more briefly, it may be summed up in two equations, which are apparently, but not really, identical: $\text{God} = \text{the universe}$, and $\text{the universe} = \text{God}$. These yield two distinct types of Pantheism, according as stress is laid, in the first, on the Divine life which is manifested, or, in the second, on the material medium of its manifestation. Thus Pantheism is ever tending, on the one

hand, towards theism, on the other, towards materialism.

Strangely, these two types, distinct as they are, may be found combined in the same thinker, so that Spinoza, a typical pantheist, could be described both as an "atheist" and as a "God-intoxicated mystic." Spinoza, with his doctrine of the One Reality manifested both in extension (matter) and intension (thought), has exercised, directly and indirectly, an influence which rather grows than decreases with the lapse of time. Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe" is an attempt to combine modern biological science with the Spinozistic philosophy. And it may well be that the next great Christian system of philosophy will borrow from Spinoza its metaphysical foundation.

Yet, as a world-theory, Pantheism is exposed to two fatal objections:

(a) It is essentially the denial of the existence of personality and that which personality connotes—freedom—both in the case of God and man. The Divine life is, as it were, unfolded from within according to necessary laws, which are not the expression of spontaneity or freedom. And men, as all other beings, are but parts or fragments of the Divine, entirely destitute of all that is meant by self-hood, and of every moral attribute, because they are *mere* parts, entirely

necessitated by the nature of the whole. Is it to be wondered at that Pantheism, in spite of the religious fervour which it is capable of inspiring in certain minds, does yet tend, in other minds, towards the opposite extreme of an atheistic materialism ?

(b) But there is yet more to be said. For Pantheism, pushed to its logical consequences, means not the blurring merely, but the entire obliteration of all intellectual, æsthetic, and moral values. For it stands or falls by the belief that God is *equally* manifested in every part of the universe, and that every act reveals His true nature. But, if so, as we have pointed out already, then the distinctions between the true and the false, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the evil, are not founded in the nature of things. For each member of these contrasted opposites is equally divine. God is alike revealed, and in the same sense, in the truth which has been laboriously acquired and in the lowest superstition; in the beauty which uplifts us and the ugliness which repels us; in the most heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and in the vilest and most inhuman crimes which have disgraced our humanity. There is no reason for giving a preference to the Christian saint over the most abandoned criminal, for both are parts of God and reveal His character.

In spite, then, of all that is spiritual and indeed fundamentally true, in some of the teachings of pantheistic writers, these two fatal flaws must prevent the acceptance of Pantheism, in its natural and logical meaning, as a satisfactory theory of the universe.

II. Pluralism is perhaps, for the moment, the most fashionable mode of philosophy. It stands at the opposite extreme of thought from Pantheism. As that reduces the universe to the manifestation of one Being or Life, so this resolves it into an innumerable multitude of centres of intelligent, or at all events sentient, activity. It is the interaction of these beings, or "monads," as Liebniz (the typical pluralist, as Spinoza is the recognised exponent of pantheism) termed them, which produces the cosmos, or harmonious whole, which we call the universe. Here, then, we have an extreme form of idealism, for mechanism, and even materiality, becomes thus an appearance merely. Just as Pantheism preserves one side of Theism, and indeed lays a one-sided and exaggerated emphasis upon it, so Pluralism may be, and by some pluralists—*e.g.*, Professor James Ward—is taken over bodily and adopted into theistic doctrine. For obviously one monad may be supreme among the other monads, or even the ground of their existence. More than this, we can consistently

be both theists and pluralists even if (with Howison) we regard all the monads as self-existent and eternal. The great merit of Pantheism is its insistence on the Divine immanence, that of Pluralism is the stress which it lays on personal, or at least individual willing and initiative. The fault of Pantheism is that it so annuls distinctions as to destroy personality and all values; that of Pluralism is that it so emphasises distinctions as to do away with unity, and renders the harmony which our universe does undoubtedly present an insoluble riddle.

More in detail, Pluralism cannot be accepted as a world-theory:

(a) Because mechanism, physical laws, the material, that whole side of things which the natural sciences explore, cannot be a mere delusion. To exalt this side into the Absolute Reality is the error of naturalism, but to deny its relative reality appears to be no less an error. For, so far as we can see, mechanism, materiality, is no mere appearance, but the vehicle or necessary medium for the manifestation and activities of spirit. From the point of view of Christian Theism we should say that they represent that self-limitation of God whereby He comes to be immanent in the universe. However, it is not from this point of view that we are now criticising the pluralistic hypothesis, but rather on the

ground that it betrays the true interests of idealism by this practical denial of the reality of that law-abiding, orderly world which physical science has revealed to us. We cannot but hold that the "laws of nature" which patient research discloses (while not governing or controlling nature, but being merely statements of the orderly sequence of natural phenomena) are rather the frame in which the activities of free creatures are set, and indeed their *necessary* frame, than the mere average results of those activities themselves. Professor James Ward writes that "orderliness and regularity we now observe are held to be the result of conduct not its presupposition." We believe that the exact reverse of this statement is the conclusion to which we are led alike by physical science and a sound metaphysic. The "orderliness and regularity" of the universe are the expressions of the whole, and are the necessary conditions of the activity and spontaneity of the living creature. As Pringle-Pattison points out: "A system of unvarying natural order . . . is demanded in the service of the higher conscious life as the condition of reasonable action."

(b) But further, Pluralism fails to account for the harmony and orderliness of the universe—that is, for the very features which constitute it a cosmos, and not a mere chaotic jumble of

disconnected events. The "reign of law" may be, in fact is a postulate of natural science, one which can never be *completely* verified in experience. But it is a postulate which is in the course of constant verification, and without it not only science, but the ordinary intercourse of life would be impossible. Now the pluralistic theory furnishes no answer to the question, "What makes the activities of these numberless sentient beings into a system, an ordered and harmonious whole?" The idea of a "pre-established harmony" appears as a *deus ex machina*, imparted arbitrarily from outside, in order to solve a difficulty for which no solution can be found in the theory itself. And, if we invoke thus the direct action of God, what becomes of the spontaneity of the monads? As Pantheism tends to degenerate into materialism, so Pluralism tends to hand over the universe to the reign of chance. And it makes matters no better if the elements of this "chance" are the irresponsible actions of the beings who compose it. Surely, again, we may argue, the very idea of the actions and interactions of these monads implies a system other than themselves within which they act and interact.

For these reasons, then, we are compelled to reject the theory of Pluralism as a sufficient account of the universe.

III. We are now left with the hypothesis that Christian Theism is the true explanation of a teleological universe, that is, one of which the characteristic is that it is a process, including, in an ordered and harmonious whole, countless subordinate processes, all alike being of necessity (for this is the very meaning of process) directed towards an end. The fact that, on what appear to be sound reasons, we have been led to reject the rival hypotheses of Pantheism and Pluralism, would naturally predispose us toward its acceptance. But this predisposition is raised to as near a certainty as the case admits of (see Chapter II. on Belief and Faith) when we discover that this view includes the truths which the others embody, while avoiding the errors, or exaggerations, into which they both fall.

Put briefly, Christian Theism is that doctrine of the nature of God, and of His relation to the universe, which results from the belief in an historic Incarnation. Still more shortly, and stated in a form which no doubt demands expansion, it is the view that God is both transcendent and immanent. We now expand this statement, in the form of a contrast with the two rival world-theories which we have just criticised.

(a) With Pantheism, Christian Theism preserves the unity of the universe. It is an

harmonious whole, because it represents the thought of a single mind. Again, Theism regards the existence of the cosmos, and all its processes, as due to the presence and working in it of the immanent God, who is yet transcendent, and the Creator.

The metaphysical explanation which it offers of the world-process, or evolution in the largest sense, is, that it represents the gradual self-revelation of the Divine Word or Reason, the Logos, from the inorganic, through all orders of the organic world, culminating in the rational, self-conscious, moral life of man. "That which has come to be in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The Logos *is* that rational, moral principle of the world which our studies in this chapter have led us to postulate, and which was fully revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." He is the source of all creation, "apart from Him there came into existence not even one single thing," He is its sustaining life, "in Him all things consist," and He is the goal of the long process of the universe: in Him all shall be at last gathered up, and find its completed harmony and the resolving of all contradictions, for it is the Divine purpose "to sum up all things in Christ."

Unlike Pantheism, Christian Theism preserves the relative freedom of all creatures, and finds room for the free play of individuality and initiative. In fact, the world-process is seen as a gradual advance towards freedom and personality, as the creatures move upwards and partake more and more fully of the nature of the Logos.

The expansion of this thought we must reserve to our chapter on personality. And because the eternal values, goodness, truth, and beauty, inhere in personality, Theism fully preserves these also, and thus escapes that which we have noted as the cardinal error of Pantheism, their obliteration in a unity without real distinctions. It is important to observe in what way these distinctions are preserved and reconciled with the oneness of the universe. Creation in this view is an act of Divine self-limitation, springing from the very nature of God, Who is Eternal Love. More especially is this seen in the creation of men, who in a sense which cannot be predicated of other creatures, are independent centres of thought and activity, so that man can set his will in opposition to the Divine will. In that possibility, due itself to a supreme act of self-limitation or sacrifice on the part of God, lies also man's chance of true, because freely

chosen, perfection, through bringing his own will into harmony with the Will of God.

God, whose power brought man into being,
Stands, as it were, a hand-breadth off, to give
Room to the newly made to live,
And look at Him from a place apart,
And use His gifts of mind and heart.

(b) Fewer words are needed to point the likeness and contrast between Christian Theism and Pluralism, contrast at least with the unmitigated, or non-theistic form of the latter.

Like Pluralism, as we have seen, Theism insists on the twin facts of freedom and personality. Ample room is found for them, owing to that act of Divine self-limitation which is creation and the sustaining of creation in being.

Pluralism, we saw, labours under the difficulty of accounting for the order, the unity of the cosmos, if that be the result of the independent activities of countless individuals. This difficulty does not exist for the theist, who regards the universe as the expression in time and space of the Mind of God as transcendent, and all its myriad workings, as due to the presence in it of God as immanent. For him the independence of the creature is not self-originated, but due to the continuous self-limitation of the

Creator; and while real, is yet relative and never absolute, for in Him "we" and all other creatures "live and move and have our being."

The special problems of Christian Theism, the Personality of God (and of man), and the distinctions which it holds to exist within His Personal Being, we reserve for further discussion in a later chapter.

Meanwhile our restatement of the "argument from design" is so far complete, and it appears to us to lead to a conclusive result, as conclusive, that is, as any of the results of science which do not admit of direct and complete verification in experience. Such verification, we have insisted, is not obtainable in regard to any of the truths by which men live. Certainty as to the supreme truth of all, the Being of God, can be reached, but not by the power of reasoning alone, though that must play its part. But, so far as reasoning goes, the line of thought which we have here pursued appears to lead without a break or flaw to its goal. We have seen that an overwhelming body of facts, laboriously collected by the natural sciences, points to the existence in the universe of a rational and moral principle, which is revealed in a process of striving towards an end, and that end appears to be an increasing

measure of rationality and freedom. And of the various hypotheses which have been offered in explanation of this world process, that of Christian Theism alone stands the supreme test of embodying in itself the truths enshrined in other systems, and at the same time avoiding the errors by which they are disfigured.

CHAPTER VI

THE MORAL ARGUMENT

THE fourth of the so-called "Proofs of the Being of God" is founded on the fact of conscience, in the sense of "the feeling of moral obligation." This is what is known as "the Moral Argument," because it is based on the existence, in man, of the "moral sense."

In its usual form the Moral Argument runs somewhat as follows: We have the feeling, or sense, that we "*ought*" to do, or to abstain from doing, certain acts. This feeling is an ultimate fact of human nature, which can neither be explained away, nor analysed into simpler elements. It is entirely independent of any calculation of the results of a given action, for it pronounces that it is "right" or "wrong" whatever its consequences may be, either to myself or to others. In fact, this independence of and indifference to consequences is precisely that feature which distinguishes the moral sense from prudential considerations, or "enlightened self-love." Moreover, this feeling is always

accompanied by the sense of authority. To use Kant's well-known phrase, it comes to us under the form of "the categorical imperative." It issues commands and expects to be obeyed, irrespective of our personal inclinations. However we may desire to do so, we cannot change or modify it in the slightest degree. Once more, if we do disobey its behests, we are visited by the feeling of remorse, and this feeling, again, is unanalysable into other elements, and in particular can be sharply distinguished from the mere feeling of regret, of which we are aware when we have made, as we say, a mistake, or acted contrary to the dictates of prudence. Hence, while this moral sense, or feeling of obligation, is truly part of ourselves, in fact belongs to the deepest stratum of our being, it cannot be self-originated. This conclusion follows from its unconditional character (its entire independence of consequences), the sense of authority which it carries with it, and its attendant feeling, or accompanying shadow of remorse. We must, then, find its source in an authority external to ourselves, in the Personal Will of a Righteous God. This is the essential form of the Moral Argument.

Three serious objections have been brought against it. These we must first state, and then consider how far they are valid.

1. In the first place, it is said that human actions cannot be isolated from any other happenings in the physical universe. Like all other events they form part of a rigid system of causes and effects, which is governed according to unalterable laws. But if our acts be thus determined, the sense of moral obligation is a delusion, for it necessarily involves a certain freedom to obey or to disobey. If we can only act in one particular way, then there can be no meaning in saying that we "ought" to act in this, or in any other way.

2. In the second place, the moral sense which human beings undoubtedly now possess, can, it is claimed, be shown to have been derived from non-moral, infra-human beginnings, and this destroys the validity, in the sense of the absolute, binding character of our moral judgments.

3. In the third place, it is asserted that the many conflicting ideas which exist as to what is morally right or wrong, preclude any universal inference from the "moral sense."

Thus if in any form the Moral Argument is to survive destructive criticism, it is necessary (1) to establish the fact of human freedom, and (2) either to disprove the evolutionary account of conscience, or to show that the problem of origin has no bearing on that of validity, or that

it has a different bearing from that which is suggested.

1. FREEDOM.—We have, in the first place, to think of what kind of freedom the “moral argument” demands, if it is to stand at all. For it is quite clear that in any case unlimited freedom is not to be attributed to human beings. While we may stop far short of the idea conveyed by the popular phrase “creatures of circumstance,” it does remain true that to a large extent we are the creation of our circumstances, if by these are meant our inherited qualities and acquired habits and our past and present environments. The real question is not whether these limitations exist, which they undoubtedly do, but whether, within them, we are possessed of that degree of freedom which entitles us to regard ourselves as responsible, and therefore moral agents. Pure determinism would regard us as not the authors, but only the spectators of our actions. Have we any valid reasons for rejecting this theory?

(a) It is maintained in the interests, as we saw, of a rigid mechanical theory, which, in the last resort, and expressed in the simplest terms, views Reality as consisting in the movements of material particles determined by mathematical laws. In this case, as Laplace held, from the original constitution of the solar system, all

subsequent events, including the actions of human beings, might be predicted by an intelligence of sufficient power and range, with the same accuracy and certitude as astronomers predict an eclipse. On this view, spirit appears as an inert and ineffectual concomitant of certain physical changes. To put it shortly, the autonomy of the spirit is denied on the ground of the uniformity of nature. But on what grounds is the principle of uniformity itself asserted? Careful consideration reveals that, at any rate, it is not an inference from experience, for the very simple reason that our experience does not cover the totality of being, and therefore no inference as to the whole range of existence can be drawn from it. Uniformity is rather a postulate, or working hypothesis, which natural science is compelled to make in order to deal at all with its materials. And it is found to "work," to be justified, within the range of experience in which it is applied—namely, the phenomena which the natural sciences investigate. But this is not in itself a reason for extending its application to a quite different region of experience—namely, all the actions of all conscious beings. This is, of course, no proof that it does not apply here also, but only that it does not of necessity so apply.

That is precisely what the advocates of

freedom maintain. The postulate of uniformity, it is urged, however much it may be verified in the one sphere, breaks down if we assume it as a working principle in history. Human actions are unpredictable from the past, whether that past be the primordial material of the universe, or the past of the race, the nation, or the individual. Even in regard to "Nature" in the ordinary and restricted sense, the confident assertion is made to-day in various quarters that the future does not resemble the past, that we are always witnessing the creation of something fresh. This is the cardinal point of the Bergsonian philosophy, and the contention of all "pluralists." But we are leaving the truth or otherwise of this assertion entirely on one side. It is sufficient for us to notice that the principle of uniformity is found in a real sense to work in regard to Nature's mechanism: the only question before us at present is, Whether the actions of human beings must be brought within this mechanism? And we have just seen that examination of the ground of the principle of uniformity shows that they *need* not be brought within it. But is there any positive reason why they should be so excluded? Is there any warrant in reason for the faith that, within whatever limits, either all or some human actions are not mechanically determined, are

not predictable from a knowledge, real or possible, of the past ? There is one such reason given, and we are now to consider whether it is valid or not. The foundation of the belief in our freedom is our consciousness that we are free. It is certain that we have this consciousness. I am conscious of being myself the cause of the greater part of my bodily movements. I am conscious that time after time when there lie before me two or more alternatives, I am free to choose this one or that. Nor can any mental effort, whatever my philosophical creed may be, rid me of this impression. And, again, I find that this consciousness is shared by all other human beings with whom I have to deal. They regard me, and I regard them, as responsible (and therefore free) beings. Otherwise, all human intercourse would cease to be possible, at any rate under the forms with which we are familiar, for its very foundation is this common recognition of moral responsibility. The determinist, while he admits this consciousness of freedom, asserts it to be an illusion. The point to be considered is, that it rests on the only ground on which any valid assertion can be rested, that of experience; the only ground on which we can in any sense justify, or verify, the principle of uniformity itself. Freedom is, moreover, an immediate fact of experience, while

uniformity is only to be verified by comparison of certain facts which are mediated by a multitude of sense impressions, thought associations, and the like. Further, if the common experience of men is not a guide to the truth, if, in other words, the race is, in this respect, suffering from collective hallucination, we cease to have any grounds for believing in the truth of any statement on any subject. Not freedom only, but uniformity, disappears out of sight, sunk in the quagmire of a universal scepticism. From this point of view, we do not seem to be merely balancing probabilities. The belief that our consciousness of freedom does represent the truth, and the denial that we can attain to any solid truth at all, is the alternative before us.

We must notice how far this argument will carry us. It gives no support to the view that we have, or ever had, absolute freedom, if any meaning can be attached to such a phrase. No human action is unmotivated, and motives arise from the past, our own or of our ancestors, or generally of the race, as well as from our environment. But the argument has established a certain freedom of dealing with motives, a power, within whatever limits, of discrimination, selection, rejection. And this is quite sufficient to constitute us (within these limits) moral, because responsible beings, and sufficient, there-

fore, to remove that particular objection to the moral argument which is rooted in a rigid determinism. The "moral sense" which that argument is founded upon, may, or may not, justify the erection upon it of theistic belief. It cannot, however, be said to be an illusion on the ground that we are not free agents, and therefore in no real sense to be held to account for our actions.

2. ORIGIN AND VALIDITY OF THE MORAL SENSE.—But, on the other hand, some hold the opinion that conscience, or the sense of moral obligation, is deprived of its unique quality, its authoritativeness, by being traced to its origin in non-moral conditions. Such is the contention of the school of "evolutionary ethics." According to these thinkers, we are to find the ultimate origin of our moral ideas in the conflict which arose in prehistoric times, between unbridled individualism and the interests of the social group, the clan, or the tribe. Men soon found that "unity is strength," that by banding together they could secure results (*e.g.*, safety from the incursions of savage beasts) which they could not secure as isolated individuals. But the continued existence of the group was seen to be impossible, if each separate individual was allowed free scope to his impulses. Hence certain actions had to be forbidden, and, in early

society, such prohibition was made effectual, not only by means of physical force, but by some form of religious, or at least supernatural, sanction, by being, according to the original sense of the word, "tabooed." At this point, the aid of the principle of inheritance is invoked. At first, rudimentary morality was enforced by external sanction, physical or spiritual, or partaking of the nature of both. But, in the course of ages, moral ideas became part of the inherited structure of the individual mind, woven into its essential fabric. Thus the external sanction became transmuted into an internal sanction. And so the genesis of conscience becomes transparently clear, and we need not summon, in order to account for it, the aid of any transcendental or spiritual factor. Such is the new form which the older utilitarianism has assumed, through its alliance with the evolutionist philosophy, in the teaching of Herbert Spencer and others.

On the whole position, the following criticisms may be made:

(a) The construction is an entirely hypothetical one. And it may be questioned whether this hypothesis does give a coherent and intelligible account of the facts. In particular, does it explain why what we may call for convenience the "evolution" of morality has been in the

direction of a greater, not less, degree of self-abnegation, as in the Christian teaching of the supremacy of love? Or why moral progress, as we know it in historical times, has been the work of morally gifted individuals, whose lives have been a continual protest against the relatively low level of the social morality of their time? At the outset, these considerations lead one, we will not say to the rejection straight away of the whole theory, but at least to a very serious doubt of its soundness.

(b) To-day, however, the account here given of the origin of human society has an hopelessly old-fashioned and superficial appearance. That social life did afford supreme advantages in the struggle of prehistoric man for self-preservation against his inanimate and animate surroundings is obvious enough. But it is not equally obvious that the consciousness of these advantages was the origin of human society. Probably no one at the present time would maintain that such politic and prudential considerations can yield a true account of the matter. They inevitably suggest the discredited "contract theory" of the origin of the State. Society is now regarded as a "natural" rather than an artificial product. And even in the sphere of pre-human evolution, the most modern thought inclines more and more to recognise

the operation of other, and, as we should say, higher elements than the selfish struggle for existence. "Animal life is not expressible in terms of the economics of modern commercialism. Its foundations are laid . . . on the facts of sex and parenthood. In the attraction of mate for mate, and in the care of offspring, as well as in the further facts of association and co-operation in flocks and herds, we can see prefigured the altruistic virtues which form the staple of our human morality." Here, we believe, is the truth contained in the theory which we are criticising, a most important and vital truth, to which it has given a distorted expression. Morality is a social thing. In its highest development it is the individual finding his truest and fullest life in subordination to the interests of the largest whole of which he can conceive, ultimately of humanity as such. But for its origin we go deeper down, and search farther back, than the school of evolutionary-utilitarian ethics would have us do. In other words, a shallow and superficial must give place to a much profounder and more sympathetic philosophy of evolution.

(c) But, further, such a philosophy is altogether opposed to judging the validity, the true value or worth, of an instinct, an idea, or an organism, by the test of origin. That, as we

have already pointed out, is to mistake entirely the meaning of any given process, for such meaning becomes only explicit in that to which the process leads or in which it issues. If the physical origin of man is to be traced back to some lowly amoeba-like form, that does not degrade man in our estimation. Instead, we are led to a higher appreciation of the mystery of life embodied in such simple forms. If life itself arose from inorganic matter, we realise that "matter" means far more than we supposed. If we may not (and indeed we cannot without a serious breach of continuity) exclude man as a moral being from the evolutionary process, then, in whatever sense, we must invest that process with a moral meaning.

We have thus disposed of two objections from the side of "naturalism" to the moral argument. The moral sense is not an illusion, as it would be if man were not a free—that is, a responsible—agent. And the attempt to discredit it, in a certain sense, as derived from non-moral elements, as we have just seen, is due to a thoroughly unsound philosophy of evolution.

3. CONFLICTING IDEAS OF MORALITY.—But there is another, and a more formidable, objection, based upon entirely different considerations, to the attempt to found any theistic inference upon the existence of the moral sense in man.

It is urged, and truly, that very varied and discordant ideas of what constitutes morality have prevailed at different epochs, and still prevail in different nations. To take one, but a very striking example. There is no doubt that the Hindoo widow, as a rule, still considers it a solemn obligation to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband even if prevented from so doing. We condemn such an act, because we, on the other hand, consider self-destruction, under any circumstances, to be wrong. Now, against what we might call the rough-and-ready form of the moral argument, this and very many other similar instances do furnish a conclusive objection. The Divine Being cannot be supposed to be the author of directly conflicting commands. But a deeper analysis of the moral sense will, we think, lead to such a restatement of the argument as is no longer open to the objection which is based on the conflicting verdicts of conscience.

4. THE MORAL ARGUMENT RESTATED.—The essence of the moral sense or conscience is the feeling that we “ought” to do or to abstain from doing. But the contents of this “ought” are not fixed once and for all. Not only, as we have remarked, are they in many instances contradictory, but we see for ourselves that they can be greatly affected by many influences,

such as education and religious convictions. What we require here is a searching analysis of the term "good." We say, that we "ought" to do that which is good. In one of its meanings, that is, the good is simply a name for the unanalysed content of the "ought." In another, and wider sense, it stands for the aim of human action at large. All men pursue some end which at least they represent to themselves as good.

Hedonists maintain that by the good in this sense is meant some condition of self-satisfaction. Utilitarians hold that the good is not my own individual satisfaction, but "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Actions, then, are good in so far as they tend to promote the most desirable condition of the greatest possible number of human beings. Intuitionists fall back on the irreducible and ultimate verdict of the moral sense; the good is that which is directly "given" in the moral consciousness. A considerable body of thinkers identify the good with "self-realisation," the completest development of the nature of the individual, the highest cultivation of all our faculties.

We may, however, gain a clearer light on this matter by considering what we have acknowledged to be the element of truth in evolutionary ethics. While discarding the shallow and arti-

ficial account there given of the rise of human society, we saw that we had to deal, not with a view which was simply erroneous, but with a distortion of a fundamental, or rather *the* fundamental, principle of human morality, one which emerges, however dimly, at infra-human levels of life. This principle can be shortly stated thus: The good has always a social reference. Essentially it involves the subordination of the interests of the isolated self to those of some wider whole. We are inclined to believe that even when this social reference of the "ought" does not appear at all in the field of consciousness, it nevertheless is present, however obscured. In the most intimate and individual moral problems, if I deliberately do that which conscience tells me I "ought not" to do, I am, so far, rendering myself unfit to make my personal contribution, to give the best of myself, to the life of the whole of which I am an integral part. Again, when I judge a certain course of action to be unworthy of myself, the "self" of which I am thinking is not a mere isolated unit, but a person who, in the fullest sense of existence, exists only in a complex network of social relationships, past, present, and future.

There is a very deep meaning in the Apostle's injunction to speak the truth "for we are

members one of another." It may be, indeed, that my moral sense bids me act contrary to the opinion of the social group to which I belong. If I am to continue true to the highest and best in me, I may be called upon to enact the unpopular or even dangerous rôle of "*Athanasius contra mundum*." The Hebrew prophets irresistibly occur to the mind in this connection.

To take a different example, I may be led by conscience to appear, and to be condemned, as unpatriotic, by offering my individual opposition to some course to which my country is committed, such as entering upon a war which I consider unjust. But even in such cases the social reference is present. I am acting, or conceive myself to be acting, in the higher interests of my nation. I am vindicating what appears to me the true, as opposed to some debased, ideal of the life of the whole to which I belong.

Our first point, then, is that the moral sense has always, whether implicit or explicit, this social reference. The action it condemns is always some form of self-assertion. The action which it approves is always some form of denial of self—of the lawless, loveless self. "Sin is lawlessness," because the law of love—the seeking

of some higher, wider good than my own individual, isolated good—is the only basis of true and healthy social life, the law which is meant to bind men into one.

But, in the second place, it is obvious that the moral sense only does not yield an absolutely sure criterion. However highly we may rate it, it is yet an instinct, and may be a blind instinct. Hence it needs to be guided and controlled by reason. To speak of conscience as needing to be educated is not to detract from its dignity, even as we do not disparage the faculties by which we discover scientific truths or appreciate beauty, if we insist on the obvious necessity of their education if they are to perform their work rightly. This is the true answer to the third objection stated above. Differences of moral conceptions of particular acts depend on different degrees in the education, or development, of conscience.

We are left, then, with the conception of the moral sense as a fundamental instinct of all normal human beings, which, in an endless variety of forms, bids them give actual existence (in thought, word, and act) to the "good." And the good, in its ultimate analysis, turns out to be the denial of some lower because purely selfish and individual interest, and the

assertion of some higher interest, higher for the precise reason that it is the interest of the whole, of which the "self" forms a part, and in the life of which the self finds its complete realisation and perfection. Following out this same line of thought, the "good" in its second and wider meaning, as the proper aim of all moral beings, can be best defined as the most perfect human society, "where love is an unerring light and joy its own security." In religious language, the highest good, the *summum bonum*, of human life is the Kingdom of God.

We have also seen that the characteristic of this moral sense or instinct is the authoritative and unconditional nature of its commands, and that conscious and deliberate disobedience to these commands is followed by the unique and characteristic feeling which we call remorse.

The existence of this fundamental instinct of human nature demands explanation. We saw that the attempt to explain it by explaining it away by reduction to the non-moral impulses of a supposed prehistoric condition of mankind breaks down on examination. Such a theory is false history, for it presents an unreal picture of the rise of human society; and false philo-

sophy, for it rests upon a now exploded view of the nature of a process—viz., the interpretation of the higher in terms of the lower stages. Is there a better hypothesis which can be brought forward ?

Every instinct corresponds to some reality—*e.g.*, the instinct of fear. Now, the reality to which the moral instinct points is that of a Divine Life which wills the good and is ever striving to realise that will through the free and conscious actions of human beings. If the supreme law of that Divine Life is love, then we can understand why the good, in the sense of the rule of conduct, demands the denial of the self considered in isolation from the whole of which it is a member, and, in the sense of the aim or ideal to be striven for, appears in the form of the perfect community. Christian theology holds that that Divine Life was incarnate in a human life of perfect love, in the Person of Jesus Christ: that His Life was the manifestation, on the stage of human history, of that “ Light which lighteth every man coming into the world ”: that His example is summed up in the Cross, the surrender of life for the redemption of the world from the curse of sin which is self-assertion: that the object of His Coming was the establishment of the Kingdom

of God, the ideal community in which love is at last realised as the perfect fulfilment of law.

This, it seems to us, is the true form in which the moral argument should be stated. At least, it does give an explanation of all the facts, and does unite them into a coherent and intelligible whole. The moral sense is not the communication to us, from outside, of infallible Divine commands, but the stirring and awakening within us of that Divine Life which is our truest and highest self, for we are made in the Image of God. The good which it authoritatively and unconditionally enjoins upon us is the law, the very essence or nature of the Divine Life itself. The good to which it points as aim or ideal is the realisation of the Divine Life in a community of human persons. The remorse with which it visits us is the sense of being untrue, disloyal to the highest which we can know, ultimately to a Person in whom it is embodied. And, at the same time, because man is a developing creature, his moral sense needs to be developed and educated, like all other faculties of his being, that he may become a more perfect organ of the Divine Life, and a more suitable instrument for the fulfilment of the Divine Purpose. And, as we have laid

down as our guiding principle, in conformity to scientific method, that hypothesis which gives the most coherent and rational account of the facts must be accepted, unless and until a better one be found, as their true explanation.

CHAPTER VII

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

THE ontological argument is so called because it seeks to prove the Being of God from the very idea of Being ($\tau\acute{o} \acute{o}\nu$), to show that the notion of a perfect Being necessarily involves the reality of its object. In its scholastic form, associated with the name of St. Anselm, it runs as follows: The human mind, somehow, finds itself possessed of the idea or concept of a perfect Being—that is, God. But a perfect Being must be an existing Being, for existence is an essential part of perfection. Hence the existence of God is a necessity of thought.

This argument, long before the days of Kant, had been subjected to much rough handling. That philosopher neatly summed up the objections to it by saying that the fact that I can form the idea of a hundred dollars in my pocket does not guarantee the fact that they are there. One may suppose that the answer of St. Anselm would have been that such an idea is a merely contingent one, whereas the idea of God or

the perfect Being is a necessary one, involved, that is, in the constitution of the human mind.

Nevertheless, the Kantian objection does really lay bare the weakness of the argument. For (I.) "existing" means "corresponding to reality," and that cannot be, as it were, smuggled into the *content* of any idea. To say that perfection has for a part of its meaning "corresponding to reality" is simply an untrue statement, although, as we shall see later on, it is a blundering attempt to express a very great truth. (II.) Again, what is meant by a "necessary idea"? Necessity involves dependence on some other idea or fact, as when we speak of a necessary inference or consequence. If A is true, then B must be true also, is the typical expression of such necessity; whereas the ontological argument, in this form, makes no attempt to establish the necessity, in such a sense, of the idea of a perfect Being. (III.) But it may be said there are certain necessities of thought itself, laws which perforce it must obey. Such is the Law of Contradiction, that A cannot be both B and also not B, that you cannot apply to one and the same subject contradictory predicates. And the ontological argument tries to show that the denial of the Being of God involves a denial of the Law of Contra-

diction. It is in effect the assertion that "perfect" and "non-existent" are contradictory predicates. But, once again, this is to beg the existence of the subject from the start. "There is a perfect Being and this Being is non-existent" is, of course, nonsense, as every statement is nonsense that sins against the Law of Contradiction. But from "I have the idea of a perfect Being" to "there is a perfect Being" is a step which is not forced upon us by the Law of Contradiction. What the argument does imply is a correspondence of a certain idea to reality which is not proved by calling this particular idea a "necessary" one. This crude attempt at an *a priori* proof of the Being of God breaks down, as we might have expected it to do, if our main contention is sound, as stated in our first chapter, that no demonstrative proof of His existence is possible, from the very nature of the case. Such a proof the older ontological argument tried to produce—a proof, that is, which every sane, logically thinking man is bound to admit.

In the remainder of this chapter we seek to show that this argument, though expressed in too scholastic a form, and, as thus expressed, untenable, does contain an element of extraordinary value, which in fact will lead us very

far on the way, as far indeed as we can expect any argument to lead us, towards the theistic conclusion.

1. The principle which underlies it is the correspondence of Thought and Reality. The ordinary man accepts this principle without question, and so does the man of science as long as he keeps to his science and does not turn philosopher. When he does, as, for example, Karl Pearson in his "Grammar of Science," and very many others do, he is apt to be infected with some form of the Kantian agnosticism, and to tell us (in different terms according to his point of view) that, after all, it is only our sensations which we know, and not "things in themselves"; that we are dealing with phenomena, and not with reality.

Such forms of idealism are essentially agnostic in the proper, not the common or theological, meaning of the word, in that they all assume that our reason is unable to give us the truth of things. External objects are the cause of certain sensations in us, but these sensations cannot, it is asserted, yield any knowledge of the nature of those objects in and for themselves. This is a form of the familiar antithesis between "reality" and "appearance." We can know appearance only, reality is veiled from us. This

profound distrust of reason goes back to Kant, although it has since taken many forms. He drew a distinction, as is well known, between the "speculative" and the "practical" reason. The former is incapable of arriving at ultimate truth. Its work is done when, by means of the "categories" which itself supplies, it has so related the materials supplied by the senses as to form a body of organised knowledge, which, however, as it is of "phenomena" only, is not and can never be a knowledge of reality. On the other hand, the "practical" or moral reason does yield absolute or ultimate truth in the form of the ideas of freedom, immortality, and God. Since the days of Kant we have witnessed the rise of schools professing a more thoroughgoing scepticism of the capacities of our rational faculty. For Kant himself, as has been said, the rift is still one within reason itself. But for some of his successors, reason as a whole, whether "speculative" or "practical," is disparaged as an instrument for arriving at truth, in favour of the feelings or the will. Consider, for example, how for Pragmatism there is no such thing as truth existing in its own right. That is "true" which is found "to work," to yield satisfactory results in the conduct of life.

We do well to notice the fundamental assump-

tion of all these ways of thinking—namely, that there is not merely a distinction, but an opposition, between a thing as it really is in itself, and the same thing as it appears to us. But the time has at length arrived when philosophers are beginning to question this assumption, and when, therefore, that imposing edifice, of very varied materials, which has been reared on the foundations of the Kantian antithesis between the “phenomenon” (the thing as it appears) and the “noumenon” (the thing as it is), is at least seriously shaken, if not tottering to its fall. For, after all, what ground has ever been shown for the belief that things are not as they appear to us? And, on the other hand, the contrary belief rests on the patent fact that after all man is a part of the Nature which he observes, that his sense-organs have been developed through his contact with nature, or, more accurately, through his sharing of her life, and therefore it is at least an act of “reasonable faith” that the nature which is mirrored in the mind of man is a reflection of the very truth of things as they are. That our reason, so far as it has yet been developed, or perhaps in its highest possible development, is immeasurably far from exhausting the nature of Reality, we must perforce admit. But that

this same reason gives us a misleading account of that fraction of Reality which it does appear to grasp is a statement which never has been, and, from the nature of the case, never can be proved. However agnostic his philosophy may be, the man of science, when engaged in his researches, does believe that he is in contact with real objects, that he is not merely manipulating or rearranging his own subjective sensations, and for this belief he has very good ground. In our opinion, it is a very healthy sign that modern philosophy appears to be, on the whole, moving away from the position of extreme idealism, towards that of a "modified realism." So far, then, we may recognise a valuable element in the very setting, so to speak, of the ontological argument, in that it assumes as its starting-point a real correspondence between the reality of things and our thought of them. And this value is not impaired if we are compelled to question or to deny altogether its particular application of this principle.

2. But we may go farther, and say that the main implication of the ontological argument is a thoroughly sound one. For if in it we can discover any condition on which the validity of our thinking as a whole depends,

such, that is, that unless we admit that condition, we cannot trust any result obtained by our reasoning faculty, then we are entitled to say that that condition represents a necessary truth. We rejected, indeed, the form in which that argument states this proposition—namely, that our idea of a perfect Being necessarily involves the existence of such a Being, for the reasons which we have briefly sketched. A necessity of thought, as we saw, means the dependence of one judgment on another which is admittedly true. But a real case of such necessity is expressed in the statement that unless the universe is itself rational, no process of reasoning can be valid, or, indeed, possible. Here is a condition implicit in every exercise of thought, and which is therefore strictly a necessary truth, unless we are prepared to adopt the position of universal and thorough-going scepticism—that is, to commit intellectual suicide. The very fact that the universe shows itself tractable to our thought, that we can reason about it at all, proves that reason, or thought, is part of its very structure. We may take as an apt illustration the analogy of (say) a play of Shakespeare, and the same letters and the same number of letters shaken together and distributed in haphazard fashion. We can

read and understand and enjoy, in the former case, because a mind like our own has arranged the letters into words and the words into sentences. In the second case, the result would be absolutely unintelligible. Similarly, the very fact that the universe is intelligible proves that an intelligence like our own is inherent and active in its every part.

How far will this argument take us? It appears to us that here we have the nearest approach to a demonstrative proof of the Being of God. For all philosophy and all science point to the unity of the universe, and hence the intelligence which informs and directs it must be also one and self-consistent. Nor is the force of this argument really destroyed by any tenable form of pluralistic theory. For if the universe be an harmonious whole, then the "monads," or whatever we like to call the ultimate thinking atoms or centres of experience, must exist in a system of harmonious relations, and this, again, implies a single and self-consistent Supreme Intelligence.

It might be urged against this argument, from the naturalistic point of view, that, as man is a part of nature, and as his intelligence has been evolved by natural processes, this is a sufficient explanation of the intelligibility of

nature, for man must of necessity be akin to that from which he has developed and of which he is a part. In this statement there appears to be a mixture of truth and error, truth in what is asserted, error in what is implied. We cannot assert too strongly man's kinship with nature, but we must decline to admit that this of itself explains the fact that nature is a rational system, which, as we have seen, is the only cause of its being intelligible. Naturalism holds, in one form or another, the view that mind is a kind of by-product of the evolution of a nervous system. But such a system is found only in a small corner of nature, so far as our knowledge goes, while a rational system, which nature undoubtedly is, must be one penetrated through and through with mentality, a system of which the underlying reality, which holds it together and expresses itself through it, must be a Reason akin to our own, though of immeasurably greater range and power. And it seems impossible to conceive of any hypothesis which explains this central principle of all our thinking, more reasonable than that which holds that the universe is the revelation of the Divine Reason in the image of which man, as a rational being, has been created.

3. But there is something more to be said

for the ontological argument in regard to its insistence on the significance of the bare fact that we can form the idea of a perfect Being. Here it very closely touches on a branch of modern philosophy which at present is attracting the attention of some of our acutest thinkers—namely, the theory of values. Historically, not indeed the origin, but the stress laid upon the idea of value or worth, dates from the work of Lotze. As is well known, he draws a sharp distinction between judgments of fact, or existence, and those of value, between the realm of that which “is,” and that of the “ought to be.” The main point for our purpose is this: the human mind is such, that it not only deals with things actually existing, and their relations, but has the power of forming ideals, of goodness, truth, and beauty, which it instinctively pronounces are the best, the highest things in the universe. We cannot, obviously, form a clear, comprehensive concept of any of them, for as ideals they transcend our finite experience. But we do feel that the striving after these things is the only worthy and proper end of a willing, rational, and feeling being such as man. Man is never more truly man than when he is arriving at a higher degree of goodness than that whereto he has attained, when

he is laboriously seeking after a fuller, higher, more comprehensive view of the truth, when he is trying to embody, in whatever material, words or sounds or colours or marble, some haunting vision of a beauty which yet ever eludes him. Now it seems quite fair to put the matter thus: either all this—that is, the highest and most distinctively human quality of man, his power of “visualising,” however imperfectly, the ideal, and straining after an ever nearer approximation to it, is just a pathetic mistake, a baseless dream, or else these ideals, so far transcending his present experience, are somehow and somewhere realised. But if realised beyond this human sphere, by their very nature, they must be realised in a perfect experience, an experience so far like our own, that it must contain elements which correspond, on a higher plane, to those which we name will and thought and feeling, while it yet transcends to an infinite degree the highest reaches of human achievement in the moral, intellectual, and æsthetic spheres. Further, this transcendent experience must stand in some very close relation to our own, so as to be able to communicate something of itself to us. Of the finest results of human effort, is it not the best explanation, after all,

that "God worketh in us"? In some way that transcendent experience must be immanent in us, at once the source of our ideals, and our inspiration in their pursuit. This, it is true, falls short of a logical demonstration, but it is a most "reasonable faith," and one which does enable us to go on, and makes of life, not a dull succession of failures but a great and shining adventure. "For thence, a paradox which comforts while it mocks, Shall life succeed in what it seems to fail. What I aspired to be, And was not, comforts me." The great alternative is more than a matter of speculative interest. Either the best part of life is an illusion, or the theistic creed is true. Which hypothesis we shall adopt depends on more than intellectual considerations. And although reason is the special faculty for the discovery of truth, it would seem to be a mistake to bar out the will and the feelings as the colleagues of reason in its quest.

We have thus given grounds for holding that while the ontological argument in its older, scholastic form cannot be regarded as tenable, yet it contains elements of extraordinary value and interest. Such elements are, its insistence on the correspondence of thought and reality; the contention that any principle found to be

necessary for the validity of thought in general must be accepted as true; and the stress laid on the idea that it is rational to believe in the objective existence of the chief "values" of human experience. Thus, in any reasoned thinking out of the basis of theism, this argument must always hold an important place.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII.

If the view of the "New Psychology" is accepted, some modification in the phraseology of this chapter (and possibly of Chapter III.) will be required. But the general conclusion will in each case stand. For the religious and moral sentiments are at any rate, in the most recent views of them, based upon fundamental human instincts. And we have already dealt with the relation between theories of development and the idea of validity.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

THE various lines of argument which we have so far pursued have, we think, established as the most reasonable hypothesis the existence of a spiritual principle immanent alike in the mind of man, and of the nature of which he is both part and spectator. In the last chapter we saw that it is to the presence of this principle, both in nature and in the mind which observes nature, that we can alone ascribe the rationality of the universe. In earlier chapters we found reason for attributing to this same spiritual principle the possession of will (Chapter IV.), of purposive intelligence (Chapter V.), and a moral character like, but infinitely higher than, our human conception of goodness (Chapter VI.).

Now, such qualities as these inevitably suggest to us the idea of personality. Rationality, will, moral goodness are found in personal beings and in them alone. Two other considerations which we have had before us bear in the same direction. First, we saw that this spiritual principle is not

rightly described as being merely immanent, but that it must also, in some real sense, be transcendent. That is to say, it is not, as it were, exhausted in the universe, so as to be identical with it, as just another name for the sum of all finite existence, if we may use for the moment a rather question-begging epithet. The spiritual principle of the universe, such is our contention, is truly manifested in everything which exists, but is more than the total sum of all its manifestations. In the second place, we were led, so to speak, naturally, following the unforced current of our thought, to a more or less precise identification of this principle ever at work and ever manifesting itself in the universe, with the Logos of the Johannine theology. And there is no doubt at all that, in this system, the Logos is a personal Being. But this second consideration, if we follow it out in all its implications, will lead us to a discussion of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, into which, for the moment, we do not propose to enter.

Our present point is this: Various lines of thought seem to lead to the view that the spiritual principle of the universe is personal—in other words, to be identified with the God of religion. And this is so momentous a conclusion as to force us to retrace our steps, and

to inquire (1) What is the real meaning of the phrase "the Personality of God": in what sense can we speak of the Supreme as a Person? and (2) What grounds have we for believing, in whatever sense, in His Personality? Can we really justify such a position?

I. THE MEANING OF DIVINE PERSONALITY.—In the first place, we must, I think, admit that this is an anthropomorphic mode of expression. It attributes to God a quality which we believe to belong to human beings. But this is not, in itself, a fatal objection. The sneer of Xenophanes, that if horses could entertain the belief in God they would undoubtedly conceive of Him as a magnified, non-natural horse, represents a charge against religion which we must acknowledge to be true, while contending that it does not, on that account, reduce all religion to an irrational absurdity. If we are to speak of God at all, or in any way represent Him to ourselves, we must inevitably do so in human language and under the familiar terms of our human thought. This does not make our language or thought untrue, although it does compel us to the admission that they are hopelessly inadequate to the expression and conception of their object. To be inadequate is to fall short of the truth, but not necessarily to contradict it, or even to fail to express some

part or aspect of it. Of course, if we accept the doctrine that man is in the image of God, this at once supplies both a philosophical basis of anthropomorphism and a criterion by which to distinguish true from false anthropomorphism. To imagine God as possessed of like passions and failings with ourselves must be false. But to regard our highest qualities of mind and heart as faint reflections of His infinite perfections cannot be described as an unworthy or irrational view. It has been said that the false anthropomorphism regards God as in the image of man, while the true regards man as in the image of God. There is no reason, therefore, to reject the doctrine of the Divine Personality on the ground that it attributes to God a quality which we know, and can only know, as belonging to human beings.

II. But this takes us only a little way. For it follows, from what has been already said, that before we can discuss the meaning of personality as applied to God we must first be reasonably clear as to its meaning when applied to man. In other words, we find ourselves faced with the old question, What, after all, do we mean by a person ?

I think that we can best approach the problem by saying that there are two words so closely connected in meaning that we may treat them,

at first, as synonymous terms, and these two words are "self" and "person."

The simplest definition of the self or person is that by these terms is meant the subject of experience. Now, this most familiar of words in modern philosophy, when correctly used, stands for the entire content of consciousness. It embraces such diverse elements as sensations, perceptions, memories, desires, resolves, imaginings, and whatever else can be "experienced." In other words, as we said in Chapter IV., it constitutes our universe. In saying this, we do not commit ourselves to any opinion as to the reality or non-reality of the external universe apart from the minds which perceive it. For it is incontrovertible that for us there can be nothing outside experience, taken in this broadest sense. At the present time, however, there is a tendency in some quarters to overwork this concept of experience—in fact, to make it do the work as well which belongs to the concept of the self. With this tendency Mr. Merrington has dealt in a masterly fashion in his "Problem of Personality." It will be necessary for us briefly to examine the relation of the self to experience, or better, to the consciousness of which experience is the content, in order to establish the reality of the self. The question resolves itself into this: Do we mean by the

self, or ego, or subject, anything different from consciousness itself? Consciousness is well described as a flowing stream. We speak of "conscious states," but these are not marked off one from the other by any defining limits or boundaries, any more than we can cut sections in the stream of a running river. As was said of old, as we sit on the bank, it is never the same river we observe as it glides swiftly by. So if we turn our eyes inward, the stream of consciousness defies our efforts to fix it, for it no longer is what it was a fraction of a second ago. The tendency, in some quarters, is to deny the existence of the watcher on the bank—the subject, or ego. I am, according to these thinkers, nothing but the mental stream, or that portion of it which occupies the fleeting moment. It would seem to follow from this that, unless we can maintain that the stream goes on flowing when the brain has ceased to function, "I" cease to exist at the moment of physical death. With this inference we are not called upon to deal, for it can, I think, be quite definitely shown that the theory which denies the existence of the self is untenable. We are forced to reject it for the following reasons:

(a) One clear fact I know about myself is that I am self-conscious. I am not only aware of the successive states of my consciousness,

but I can make myself the object of my own thought, as truly as I can so do in regard to any external object or event. And it is evident, on reflection, that a series—for, according to the view we are criticising, the so-called self is but a series of conscious states, or one of such a series—cannot possibly be aware of itself as such. Nor can a member of a series know itself as such, and contrast itself with other members.

(b) I am not only aware of a succession of conscious states, which fact itself proves that I am other and more than any one, or the sum of them, but I also become aware that there is a certain unity underlying them, and uniting them, however various they may be, as mine. And this unifying principle cannot be anything else save the ego, the self-conscious subject or person.

(c) The existence of this permanent self is necessary in order to explain the cardinal fact of memory. I know myself as the person who experienced such and such feelings, or had such and such perceptions in the past. Here we have nothing to do with the mechanism, psychical or physical, of memory, but only with the fact itself, which testifies to a permanent principle underlying the ever-changing, shifting scenes of the mental drama.

(d) Once more, if we turn from the nature of consciousness to its content, which is what we call experience, we must remind ourselves that it involves two factors, the object which is experienced, and the subject which has the experience. If we take the case of cognition, we cannot have the known without the knower; I who know must be distinguished from, and can by no means be a mere part of, that which I know. By no possible feat of mental gymnastics can we rid cognition, or any other form of experience, of this twofold, subject-object character.

Hence, for these reasons, we assert the reality of the self or person. One caution may be added. The relation between the self and the mental stream is only partly analogous to that between the watcher on the bank and the river which he is contemplating. The former relation is, of course, far more intimate, for otherwise we shall be making of the self a mere point destitute of all attributes, an empty and barren abstraction. We should thus have, in another form, the old Kantian "thing-in-itself," the mysterious entity which underlies the sensible qualities of the object. As we know the object as it really is, though doubtless not fully or adequately, when we know its attributes, and have long ago discarded the notion of the thing-

in-itself, even so we know the self as manifested in its various activities, as thinking, feeling, and willing. What can we make of man, or God, apart from the activities in which their nature is manifested? And what is that nature, apart from its activities, known or unknown? All we are concerned to maintain is the existence of the real, concrete self or person, the unifying and permanent condition of thought, and feeling, and will.

At this point we proceed to discriminate between the terms "self" and "person" which we have hitherto treated as synonymous. The true difference between them will appear at the end of our discussion. But at present we can only say this, of which the truth will appear more clearly in the sequel, that while self-hood is a given fact, personality, in this sense, stands for a quality to be acquired, although it lies implicit in every self. Self-hood admits of no degrees; while personality advances from the imperfect towards perfection. According to Lotze, God alone is the perfect Person. Finite spirits possess more or less of personality as they partake more or less of His nature.

To begin with, then, the three fundamental attributes of the self are feeling, will, and thought. But, and this is the all-important point, these faculties can only be developed in and through

social intercourse with other selves. Thus, and thus only, can the ideals to which they are directed become realised in consciousness, and possible, in any sense, of attainment.

(a) We begin with thought. The proper object of thought is the truth. But it is evident that for the discovery of truth we are dependent on the labours of other men, both our contemporaries, into whose experience we can partly enter by reading and conversation, and the seekers of past generations, whose discoveries have become part of the inherited experience of the race or of some smaller social unit. And here we may note, what is true equally of the other two faculties of our nature, that there is such a thing, however we explain it, as unconscious social inheritance. We of the civilised world, at any rate, "enter," all unknowingly, "into other men's labours." The strivings and the achievements of countless generations come to be woven as it were into the stuff of which we are made. Hence it is that each one of us has not to start afresh on the level of the prehistoric savage. The vision of truth as a far-off goal, an ideal infinitely distant, towards which we must be ever striving, can only arise at a certain level of culture. But when it does so arise, it is as the result of social intercourse, whereby the self enters in

some measure into the experience of other selves.

(b) The proper object of the will is the good. And here in still more manifold ways we are dependent on others. We are dependent on them for our knowledge of the nature of the good. To take an obvious illustration, our conception of the moral aim of action will vary very greatly according as we have been brought up, say, in a heathen, or a Mohammedan, or a Christian society. And even in the latter case the Christian moral tradition will be modified, sometimes in a very great degree, in accordance with the special moral tradition or tone of our nation, our community, till we come down to our family and immediate social surroundings.

Further, we cannot be "good" as isolated selves. The very conception of goodness involves relations to other men. And this becomes yet clearer if the true moral ideal be the Christian one of service and sacrifice for others, and its perfect exemplar be seen in the Christ. "In this we have come to know what love is, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." In the identification of morality with love ("love is the fulfilling of the law"), its social implications become manifest as nowhere else.

(c) The proper object of feeling is the beautiful, and here, at first sight, we seem to have come across something purely individual. My delight in the beauty of a sunset, or an oratorio, is surely unique, and in its true essence incommunicable. Yet, in saying this, we do not rightly judge. To that very appreciation of the beautiful there has contributed the long education of generations preceding me, whose experience has entered unconsciously into my very being, not to speak of my own education and the formative power of personal influences of the extent of which I am only partially aware. My savage ancestor often witnessed sunsets as beautiful, but not, in all probability, with anything like the same appreciation; and it may well be that the oratorio would have waked in him very different feelings. The sense of beauty, as the vision of truth, or the realisation of the true nature of goodness, is the result of a long process of growth, and the means of that growth, in all three cases, has been the social intercourse of selves, whereby they have become sharers in each other's experience.

We can now appreciate the difference between self-hood, which is, of course, the ground of personality, and personality itself, which is the development of the latent qualities of the self. Personality has been defined as "the capacity

for fellowship." The present writer would rather define it as the capacity, by means of fellowship, of becoming conscious of and striving towards the attainment of ideals. And the ideals in which personality seeks and finds (so far as they are attained in any measure) its completion and satisfaction are the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty, which answer to the elementary qualities of the self, as the self-conscious subject of experience which thinks and wills and feels. These are, to use the current phrase, the eternal values, and they exist only for and in persons: while in the consciousness and pursuit of them mere self-hood is raised to a new power, almost to a new level of being, and becomes personality. At the same time, we must remember that personality is not a static condition. It is capable, as far as we can see, of indefinite growth. We are persons, and yet, in proportion as we seek to appropriate more and more of truth, goodness, and beauty, we are ever becoming more and more truly personal. And we can so grow only in and by means of intercourse with other persons.

III. In the light of these considerations, we are now prepared to attach a definite meaning to the phrase "the Personality of God." We are not yet concerned to argue for or against the idea embodied in the phrase, but only,

at present, with the meaning to be assigned to it.

In the first place, then, following the order of our thought, which proceeded from the concept of self to that of person, it must mean that the spiritual principle in the universe, which is yet more than the universe which it indwells, is not an abstraction, but has an independent concrete existence, as the Subject of an experience which includes all that is. There is no contradiction if we imagine that the divine experience includes finite centres of experience which are to some extent impermeable to the creative and sustaining Spirit, for this would be due to the divine self-limitation. Briefly, when we speak of the spiritual principle, it is truer to speak of "Him" rather than "it," of God rather than the Absolute. Further, God must, if personal, be self-conscious and free. We saw reason (in Chapter VI.) to attribute freedom to the personal spirit of man, but the Divine Spirit must possess perfect freedom, in the sense that all His actions are the necessary expression of His nature. Freedom and determination are here combined in a higher synthesis. And this last thought leads us to a most important point. In God there can be no distinction between self-hood and personality, such as we have found to exist in man. If He is, and on the theistic view He

can be nothing short of this, the Perfect Being, then He is personal in a sense in which we are not, for we are only acquiring, with all our efforts, the lowly beginnings of personality. For His Life is the perfect and eternal realisation of those ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty in the approximation towards which human personality consists.

IV. THE GROUNDS FOR BELIEVING IN THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.—Can we show that the belief in a Personal God is a reasonable belief?

We can do so on two very sufficient grounds:

1. The Divine principle, which we have seen to be both immanent in and transcending the universe, cannot be lower than any form of existence which it has produced, or in which it manifests itself. By universal admission, personality is the crown of evolution, the highest form of life which we know. Hence, if we are to speak or think of this divine principle at all, we must do so in the terms, and under the category, of this highest form of our experience. This is the true anthropomorphism. The best and highest we know must be our truest, even if inadequate, representation of the divine. An impersonal Absolute, to which we could not attribute self-consciousness, knowledge, love, would be lower in the scale of existence than its own highest manifestation. God, who is

the source and archetype of our personal life, must be Himself at least personal, even though He must immeasurably transcend all we can mean by the concept of personality. Thus we may say, that in speaking of God as personal, we are giving expression to the highest truth which we can think about Him, to that, therefore which we must hold to be really true, unless we are utterly to distrust our intellectual faculty which we believe to be His gift, "the candle of the Lord" within us, and therefore given to guide and not to misdirect us. We can say and believe this, while we recognise that the absolute truth of the Divine Existence can only be present to the Divine Consciousness itself. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts higher than your thoughts." But we must be careful to guard against the supposition that that which is only relatively true is in any sense untrue, which would lead to a kind of scepticism involving the paralysis of all our thinking.

2. The second ground on which we are compelled—I venture to think this expression is not too strong—to assert the Divine Personality is, that it is the necessary postulate of our most fundamental conviction about the universe in which we find ourselves. That

conviction is, that goodness, truth, and beauty are eternal realities, existing by their own indefeasible right, independent of us as, in their perfection, they are immeasurably above as.

This is what we mean when we speak of "values." As objects of our conscious strivings, as aims beyond our reach, while yet our true life consists in the ceaseless effort to approximate towards them, we name them "ideals." And it is a conviction as certain as any produced by scientific demonstration, that these values are the true meaning, not alone of our little human lives, lived on a tiny planet, but of the universe itself, that they belong to the innermost heart of Reality. To quote Professor Pringle-Pattison, "It is all-important in the discussion of value and ideals to realise that these are in no sense private ends which we seek to impose upon the universe . . . when man confronts the world with his standards of value, his attitude is not that of a suppliant but of a judge. He does not appear as one who craves a kindness, but as one who claims a right; or rather, as invested with the authority of a higher tribunal, he pronounces sentence on the travesty of a universe which materialism offers him."

Now these values, while in no sense self-originated, yet have no meaning except for persons, self-conscious centres of moral, intel-

lectual, and emotional life. Not only do we in no sense originate them, but also, as we said, they constitute ideals to which we cannot attain, while yet in seeking to attain them lies the only road to the development of our personality. We are forced, therefore, to postulate, as the Reality of which the universe is a partial manifestation, a Supreme and Perfect Personality, in whom these values, which for us are ideals, are completely and eternally realised. Thus personality is not only a human quality which we attribute to God, on the ground that He cannot be less than the highest which we know or in which He is manifested; we now see that He alone, to repeat the saying of Lotze already quoted, can truly be called a Person. Our own personality, however far it may have been developed, is only a faint adumbration of an attribute which can rightly be predicated of God alone.

It would almost seem that we need another term to describe the Personality of God, and it has been suggested that we should speak of Him as super-Personal. But there are two objections to this. In the first place, the idea of the super-Personal God, true as it is in what is meant to be asserted, namely, that He transcends any conception we may form of personality, tends almost insensibly to slide into

that of an impersonal Absolute. And, secondly, the term "the Personality of God" serves to keep us in mind of the important truth, that He is not only the source but the archetype of our own personality.

The idea which the word "super-personal" is meant to express—that is, transcendence of what we mean by "person"—finds expression in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. In the first place, that doctrine stands for what is called the "Economic Trinity"—that is, for what Christians believe to be true in regard to God's self-manifestation and creation and redemption. The Father is God as transcendent, the Son is God as revealed in the world and above all in the Incarnation, the Spirit is God as immanent in nature and in man. But this is one aspect only of the doctrine in question. It is also held that these various stages of God in action represent a much deeper truth rooted in the Divine Nature, which is at any rate logically prior to His self-manifestation in nature and redemption.

We have seen that on the human plane fellowship is necessary for the development of such measure of personality as we may attain, as being involved in the supreme values of truth, goodness, and beauty, corresponding to the three distinctively personal attributes of know-

ledge, will, and emotion. Now, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is that what we understand as fellowship is on some higher plane realised within the Perfect Personality, which is thus, as it were, self-contained. This in no wise conflicts with the idea of late so powerfully advocated, as by Pringle-Pattison, that creation is the necessary and eternal consequence of God's essential nature as love, and therefore as self-communicating. Rather, it emphasises the Divine attribute of self-communication, by representing it as being a character internal to the Godhead. So the universe would appear as the unfolding, or the expression in time and space, of that which God is in Himself, in His own eternal Existence. The difficulties which have been felt in regard to this belief are at any rate largely due to the associations of the word "person," which have, on the other hand, led in popular Christianity to something nearly approaching Tritheism. The subject is well treated in C. J. Webb's recent work, "God and Personality." It will be sufficient here to add two remarks. The doctrine itself is independent of the phraseology which, however hallowed by long tradition and sacred associations, would be admitted by all theologians to be but an attempt to express the inexpressible. And while the Holy Trinity is a revealed doctrine,

it seems to afford the nearest approach to an explanation of the relation of God to the universe, a relation which, as we have seen, must be one of both transcendence and immanence, while it expresses the truth sought to be conveyed by the term "super-personal."

One objection to the doctrine of the Divine Personality has already been dealt with implicitly and by anticipation, when we laid stress on the fact that He is not less but more than we mean by personal, and that all terms must be applied to the Divine Being, not as expressing the absolute truth, which must be for ever beyond us, but by way of accommodation only. It has been said that the idea of an infinite personality is a contradiction in terms. But (I.) the point of such objection lies in its seizing upon the idea of limitation which is inherent in human personality, as if we meant to trammel the Divine within the limits of our human terms and human thought, instead of using them with the reservation that these are but reflections (though we believe them to be true and not false reflections) of a truth which we can neither think nor utter. And (II.) as we have already had occasion to remark, the term "infinite" appears to us to be somewhat ambiguous as applied to God. Its proper and useful sphere is not in theology but in mathematics. It may stand, if it be

understood to mean that there is no measure to the Divine wisdom and love. But we must definitely reject it in its bare and simple meaning of "having no limits at all." For then it would mean that no personal character, no moral attributes, could be predicated of God. All character, in God and man alike, means something definite, and therefore, in that sense, limited. There is nothing indeed outside God whereby He can be limited. That is the truth involved in speaking of Him as infinite. But, strictly interpreted, the term would imply the very reverse of what we can mean by God—a Being characterless, amorphous, chaotic. We should be therefore very careful in our use of the word, and especially in regard to drawing inferences from it.

As we have shown that the belief in the Divine Personality is well-founded in reason, we may perhaps say once more, that it is a belief which lies at the root of religion. For us, at any rate, the very meaning and essence of religion is personal intercourse and union with God. And the possibility of a personal relation to Him depends upon the truth that He is truly personal. Prayer, the very life of religion, is inconceivable except as being our intercourse, vocal or silent, with One whom we know to be like ourselves (we must not be afraid to say this) a Person.

This way of speaking doubtless, as we have said, falls far short of the truth. But it is true for us. It is the highest truth which we can grasp, the truth by which our spirit lives through the highest exercise of which it is capable, in personal communion with Him who is its source, in whose Image it is made.

CHAPTER IX

OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS

IN this concluding chapter we consider two questions, both connected closely with our main subject, and not entirely unconnected with each other. These questions are—the existence of evil, and human immortality.

I. THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL.—This has ever been the crux of the theistic creed. If God be good, and also almighty, how can we explain the facts of physical and moral evil, pain and sin?

At the outset we may notice one point, which is not always made sufficiently clear. I believe, and all our previous discussions have shown how well grounded is that view, that theism is a “reasonable belief,” in the sense that it is the only hypothesis which affords a rational and coherent explanation of the universe. It does not overthrow this belief, even if considerable difficulties attach to such a faith, unless it can be shown (*a*) that they destroy the grounds on which it is held, or (*b*) exhibit that faith as involving an internal contradiction.

Now, obviously (*a*) does not enter into the debate, for the existence of evil does not touch any of the grounds on which theism rests, as a reasonable account of nature and mind. But it is claimed that (*b*) does apply, that there is such a contradiction between two attributes of God, His goodness and omnipotence, and the existence of evil, as to render theism irrational. Such a conflict or schism in reason itself as would be thus involved, in holding that the same faith is rational and irrational, is intolerable, unless some hypothesis could be framed which would unite both the grounds on which we hold that theism is the one rational account of the universe, and of ourselves as part of it, and the ground on which it is rejected, in some kind of higher synthesis which should include both. Here at once we are met by the various systems of dualism, which assert the coexistence of a good and an evil principle contending for the sovereignty of the world, in all their endless variety. So we have Ormuzd and Ahriman of the ancient Persians, the Father and the Demiurge of the Gnostic, "God" and the "Veiled Being" of Mr. H. G. Wells. But it can be shown that dualism, however attractive it may be as an apparent way out of an insoluble difficulty—and how great that attraction is its wide dissemination and its countless forms

sufficiently prove—is no real halting-place for the human mind. We cannot acquiesce in this as the final solution of the riddle of the universe. Science, philosophy (with a few exceptions), and the higher types of religion, agree in demanding some principle of unity—be it God, or the Absolute, or an abstract idea of uniformity—as the only sufficient explanation of a universe which is a rational and organic whole, a unity, however we name or explain it, which holds together an infinite variety of particulars.

The same argument applies to a particular kind of dualism which is in vogue, in certain quarters, at the present day. We refer to the doctrine of a “finite God,” in the sense which would make God limited, not by His own nature, as He assuredly is, but by some force outside Himself, as, for example, by “intractable matter,” or by the universe as such, whether that be viewed as created by Him, or as co-eternal with Him. This specious way out of the difficulty we cannot accept. For the theist, God is not a Being over against the universe, dealing with it from without, but its immanent principle of life, however He may transcend it in the fulness of His Personal Being. He creates it ever, for it is from moment to moment the expression of His Mind and Will and Love.

But, if we thus reject dualism in every shape

and form, how can we reconcile that goodness, without which God would not be God, with the existence of evil in the universe? How are we to deal with the dilemma, "either not almighty or not good"?

In the first place, we must get a clear idea of what we mean, or ought to mean, when we speak of God as "almighty." Omnipotence is defined as the power to do all things which are not intrinsically impossible. There are obviously limits to the power of God. He cannot make that which is false to be true, or *vice versa*. There are things, as the above definition allows, which are *per se* impossible. Their impossibility, that is, is not due to a defect of power, but is grounded in the nature of things, involved in the rational structure of the universe, which is precisely the same thing as saying that they are impossible for God, the rational Principle of the whole.

Among such things must be reckoned the creation of a moral being incapable of sin. On this our human plane, where souls are "made," or rather in the making, through their own moral efforts, the possibility of the choice of good involves that of the choice of evil. The alternative is that between a man freely willing and a machine so constructed that it cannot go wrong. But to the latter, no moral qualities

can be attributed. And we believe that God, to speak in human fashion, deliberately took the risk, because He willed to dwell in a community of sons, rather than to be surrounded by a collection of faultlessly running machines. God thus allowed for the possibility of sin, as the price of a greater good. A world in which moral good is capable of being realised is worthier of Him, we may surely say, than one from which moral evil should be excluded by a fiat of "omnipotence." The meaning of the world, the purpose of its age-long evolution, can be nothing less than the production of moral personalities. And at the root of the whole process is the perpetually renewed act of the Divine self-limitation or sacrifice. To speak in terms of Christian theism, the Cross, the symbol of the self-sacrifice of God, is marked on all creation. The very act of creation, as far as we can realise it, was a spontaneous limiting of the mode of the Divine Existence, involved in the very nature of Eternal Love. Still greater, we conceive, was that degree of limitation which is implied in the creation of man, with power to oppose his own will to the will of God. And, as Christians believe, for the purpose of human redemption the Divine Logos "emptied Himself . . . and coming into existence in form of man, humbled Himself, and became

obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Sin brings certain consequences. In the language of theology, the chief of them is the loss of the Vision of God. The finer faculties of the soul are coarsened and obscured. In practical experience, most of the misery and pain of the world is due to moral evil, to the lawless self-seeking which is of the very essence of sin. When we speak of the "punishment" of sin, we must remember that the results of the breach of the divine order of the world follow, as it were, automatically. They are involved in the nature of sin. We speak truly of "remedial punishment," for the laws of the spiritual and the natural realms are alike the expression of the Divine Love, ever seeking that the banished may be restored. On the other hand, no fact is more familiar than that the consequences of wrongdoing are not confined to the sinner, but fall oftentimes, and sometimes with far heavier force, upon the innocent. In such cases, it is not possible to rid ourselves of the sense of injustice. Nor is it possible for the Christian theist to dissociate the suffering of the innocent from what he believes to be the supreme instance of such suffering, in Him "who bore our sins in His own Body on the tree." In the latter case,

as in the former, it is possible to speak of injustice, if by justice we mean that each one should receive his deserts, no more and no less. But there is, after all, a fallacy underlying such judgments. And the fallacy consists in the assumption that there is such a thing as an individual pure and simple; that any human being can exist as an isolated unit, apart from the human environment. Whereas, in fact, no one of us can live for himself, or die for himself. We are what we are, as parts of an organic whole, which is humanity itself. Our good and our evil, in great measure, though by no means exclusively, come from our social inheritance and our social environment. In the end, unless our highest instincts, our judgments of value, are but false lights to lead us astray, we may trust to the justice of God. We hold that the sufferings of the innocent, in consequence of the disorder which sin, as a breach of the divine order, has caused, are such things as follow necessarily from that which is one of the conditions of there being a moral order at all, the solidarity of the human race. That it should not be so would, in this case, be something intrinsically impossible, for it would be contrary to the rational order of the world.

II. But what are we to make of all that mass of pain and suffering, animal and human, which,

so far as we can see, is not attributable to sin ? The qualification, "so far as we can see," is inserted advisedly, for some have held that the rebellion of intelligent wills, angelic and human, against God has introduced a disturbing factor into the world, in much the same way as a grain of dust will interfere with the working of a delicately adjusted watch. We would not rule out the possibility of an element of truth in this suggestion, but it is one difficult, to say the least, to defend by argument, except in so far as we can clearly see that sin, being in its own nature irrational, and in conflict with the Divine order of the universe, must have very far-reaching effects. From this it does follow that many of the indirect consequences of the intrusion of moral evil into the world must be such as are extremely hard to assign to their proper origin.

But there are two other considerations which throw some light on this dark problem.

I. We must believe that the supreme end of the Divine Creation working in the world is the emergence of free spirits, capable of a rational obedience and love. As freedom cannot be directly created, for then it would cease to be freedom, this implies that creation itself is an act of Divine self-limitation or sacrifice. It is, from this point of view, conceivable that

suffering represents a condition without which that end could not have been attained. In this case, a material universe calculated to issue in the appearance of free, therefore moral, beings, from which the possibility of suffering should be excluded in advance, may be something intrinsically impossible, contrary to that innermost rationality of things which is the nature of God Himself. On a somewhat lower, or, at any rate, less abstract plane of thought biologists speak of the evolution of pain, or, rather, of a sentient organism capable of pain, as necessary to the appearance of all the higher forms of animal life. Pain is a danger-signal, and, as such, a powerful factor in self-preservation. And in the region of moral and spiritual experience, it is a commonplace to point to the ennobling and refining influence which pain *may* exercise, and has in fact exercised on human character, both in the case of the sufferers themselves and of those who minister to their relief. We should expect to discover some such results, if it be indeed the case that the possibility of suffering is a necessary result of that act of self-limitation by which God creates and sustains in being a world which has for its chief purpose the "making of souls," the production of free, spiritual, and in a real sense, self-creative personalities.

II. If this view is at any rate an approximation to the truth, it corresponds in a very wonderful way to a thought, which, however modern in its expression, and however much it may owe, in the emphasis now laid upon it, to the stress of recent events, is yet as old as Christianity itself—namely, the conception of a God who suffers in and with His world. It has always been, and is now increasingly felt to be, an intolerable idea, that He is a mere Spectator of the world's tragedy, like the deities of Epicurus, in some aloof, unapproachable heaven, where

“No sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred, everlasting calm.”

Rather, as truly immanent in His world, He must be immanent both as Actor and Sufferer. His self-limitation, which springs from His nature as Love, involves suffering for Himself in and with His creatures who are struggling upwards towards Him as the goal and perfection of their being.

It is unnecessary to point out at length how this idea of the redemptive suffering of God is one central to the Christian Creed. If we follow the teaching of the New Testament, we are led to believe that the Cross is not merely a definite historical fact, but represents a time-

less, eternal Sacrifice of God on behalf of His creation. The Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world." As has been finely said, "There is eternally a Cross in the life of God."

Such a conception may become a real moral dynamic. For it is a summons to us both to work and suffer with God for the redemption of the world. In this Divine work, we are *συνεργοὶ θεοῦ*, fellow-workers of God. We may trace a similar thought in that fine phrase of St. Paul, where he speaks of himself as "filling up that which is lacking in the sufferings of the Christ."

One more point remains to be dealt with—namely, the bearing of the theistic creed on the problem of human immortality. The question, of course, is not, as it is popularly and crudely expressed, "if a man die, shall he live again?" but whether we have any grounds in reason, setting aside, for our purpose, the peculiarly Christian answer, which rests on belief in the Resurrection of Christ, for the hope that personality persists after the death of the physical organism which is its present expression?

I. We may believe that certain fundamental human instincts (as they appear to be) which are here involved, such as the almost universal

belief in survival, the craving for a future in which righteousness shall be vindicated, appearances of injustice removed, inequalities redressed, are as truly parts of the structure of the universe as the fact itself of physical death. Now, on the theistic view, the universe is not a haphazard collection of facts, nor, as being in its essence rational, can it be destined to confound our highest aspirations. For the purest hopes of immortality are unselfish, being concerned not with personal destiny, but with wider and larger hopes of the future of the race, and the vindication of the moral order. Surely, then, a theist is justified in holding that *such* instincts are true, being grounded in that One Reality of which the universe, as we know it, is the partial and temporary expression.

II. There is another and perhaps a stronger ground for the hope in question. It is of the very essence of the theistic belief that the ideals of goodness, truth, and beauty are eternally valid. In the life of God Himself, we believe that they are realised in their timeless perfection. We know them here and now, not as abstract ideas, but as embodied, with greater or less imperfection, in human personalities. Our instinctive conviction that such embodiments, however imperfect, can never be lost to the universe, that they are what they seem to be

on the face of them, prophecies of a more complete attainment, can only be satisfied by the survival and progress, in some future state, of individuals, and not by some vague belief in racial advance, or by the existence of such ideals in the Divine Mind. God could never have kindled such sparks only to be quenched for ever. If goodness, for example, be eternal, then its eternity cannot mean anything less than the immortality of personalities in whom it is to any degree realised now. If we assent to the words of the poet that the "wages of virtue" are "going on and not to die," we must remember that virtue is an abstraction, and therefore (so far as human) non-existent, save as an attribute of virtuous persons, and that therefore such an aspiration has no meaning at all, unless it be that these persons are to "go on," and that the death of their bodies is not, for them, the end of all moral progress.

Belief in human immortality (in the only sense in which immortality can appear desirable to a rational being—namely, not as a *mere* survival, but as an opportunity for a fuller and richer, more truly moral and personal life) is involved in the belief that the universe has its ground, and only rational explanation, in an Eternal Person who is Himself the Perfect Realisation of all goodness, truth, and beauty,

and the ever-present indwelling Source of the embodiments of these ideals in created personalities. Theism has for its necessary corollary the firm conviction that, in all the wide universe of God,

“There never shall be one lost good.”

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